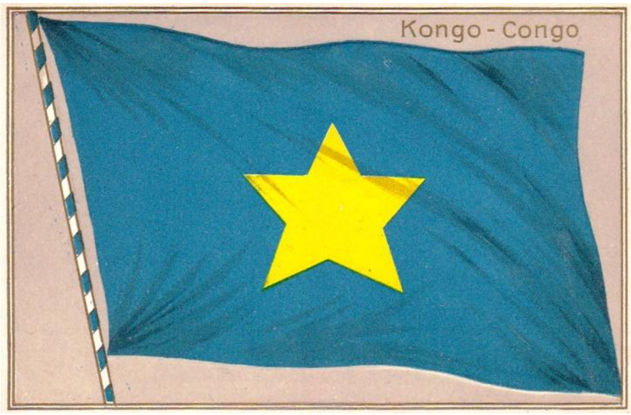
Les Congolâtres

Bulletin philatélique bimestriel
diffusé GRATUITEMENT par email sous PDF
Février – avril – juin – août – octobre - décembre

NUMERO 30 – Octobre 2017





BELGIAN CONGO – GREAT BRITAIN POSTAL RELATIONS 1884 - 1960

CONTACTS : *Thomas & Philippe* **LINDEKENS** – *lindekens.bogaerts@skynet.be*

Les Congolâtres

COMITE DE REDACTION





Gerald Marriner   Thomas Lindekens   Luc Vander Marcken





Jean Herreweghe   Patrick Janssens   Philippe Lindekens

For this bulletin, thank you to: Vincent Schouberechts, Nick Martin, Mike Dovey, Patrick Maselis Graham Mark, André Bollen and Henk Slabbinck.

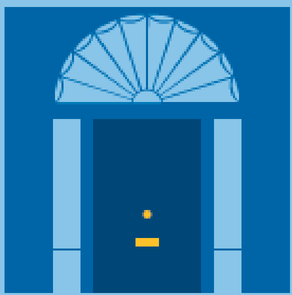
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Numéro 24 – spécial 2016	

La Royal Philatelic Society London (RPSL) fêtera son 150ème anniversaire en 2019.
A cette occasion, une exposition internationale sera organisée à Stockholm.
S.M. le Roi Carl XVI Gustaf de Suède a gracieusement accepté d'en être le Parrain.



STOCKHOLMIA2019

DU 29 MAI AU 2 JUIN

LA CEREMONIE INTERNATIONALE DU 150EME ANNIVERSAIRE DE LA ROYAL PHILATELIC SOCIETY LONDON

L'exposition accueillera des revendeurs de pièces philatéliques et des maisons de vente aux enchères du monde entier.
L'exposition comprendra un programme philatélique et social complet.
Seuls les amis et les membres de la RPSL seront autorisés à exposer.
Les catégories en compétition seront jugées par un jury international nommé par le Conseil de la RPSL.



STOCKHOLMIA 2019
sera organisée au "Waterfront Congress Centre", Nils Ericsons Plan 4. C'est le lieu le plus récent et le plus polyvalent de Suède pour les réunions et événements à grande échelle.



Pour plus d'informations : rendez-vous sur le site Web **stockholmia2019.se** ou contactez Jonas Hällström : **jonas@stockholmia2019.se**


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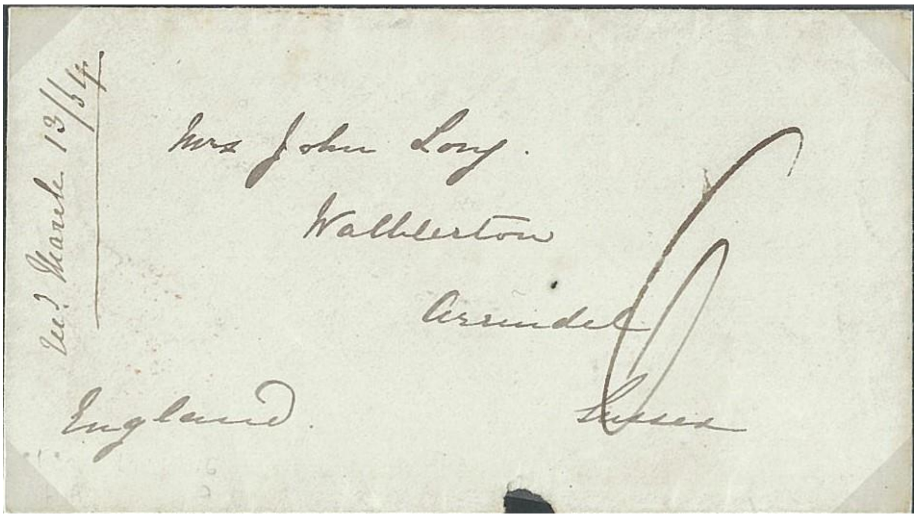
Prephilatélic period

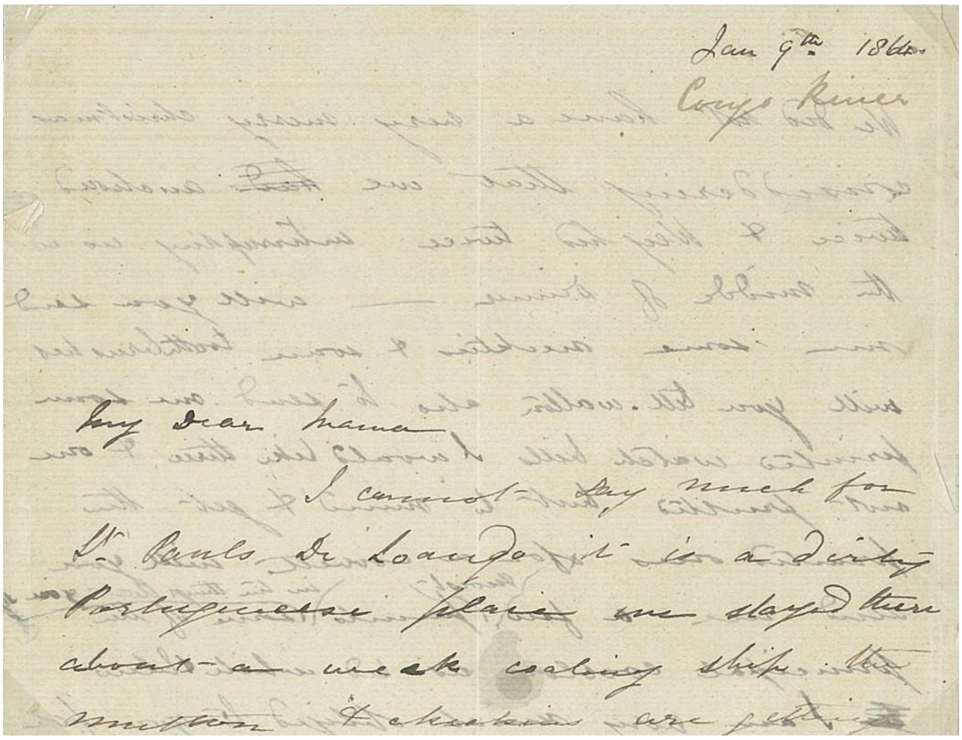
1. Before Congo Free State (1886)

1.1 British anti-slavery patrols (1808-1886)

In 1807, the British parliament banned the slave trade. This was an important decision, given that British ships had transported 4 million slaves since 1650. In 1808, the “Royal Navy Anti Slavery Fleet” was created, in order to hunt down and stop the slave ships. The fleet’s task was to suppress the Atlantic slave trade by patrolling the coast of West Africa.

Letter written by Lieutenant Long of the *H.M.S. Zebra* (British anti-slavery ship) dated “Jan 9th 1864, Congo-River” and posted to his mother in Arundel (Great Britain). 6d postage (officer's concessionary rate from July 1857 until late 1869), payable on arrival. On the reverse, transit postmark: London (12 March) and arrival postmark: Arundel (same day),


Rec^d March 13/64
Mrs John Long.
Walberton
Arundel
Sussex
England
6

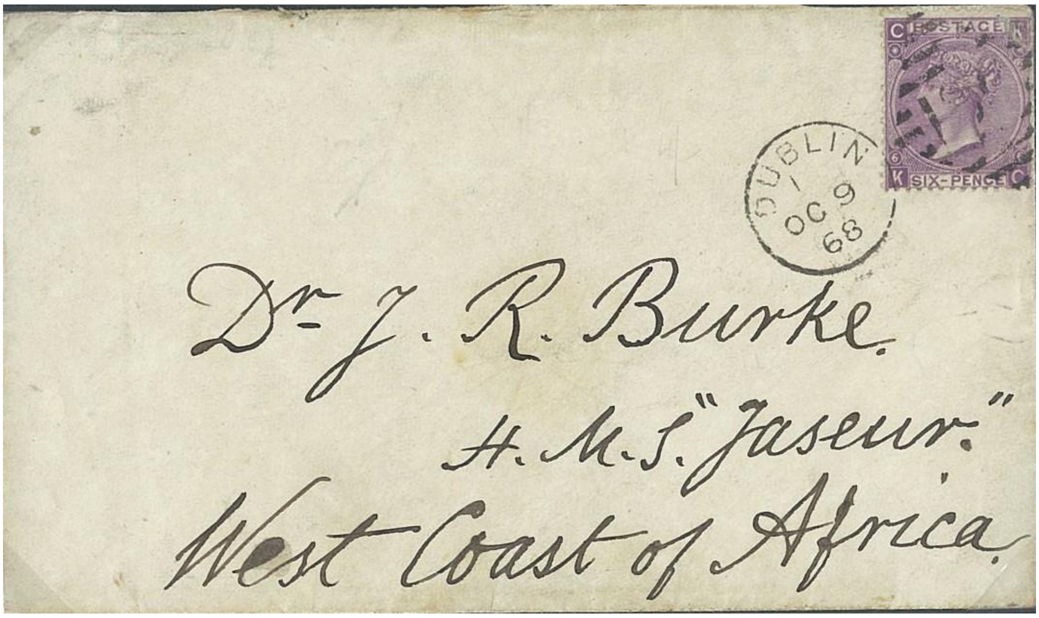

Jan 9th 1864
Congo River
My dear Mama
I cannot say much for
St Pauls de Loando it is a dirty
Portuguese place we stayed there
about a week coaling ship, the
mutton & chickens are getting

The logbook of the *Jaseur* mentions that the ship was in Banana from March 16 to April 12, 1868, it also relates the visit made by Lt. Greenhow on April 9 to the British ship *Normandy* which was also in Banana. The letter was handed over by the officer to the crew of the *Normandy*, who immediately handed it to the naval agents of the harbour who immediately posted it (June 6, 1868).

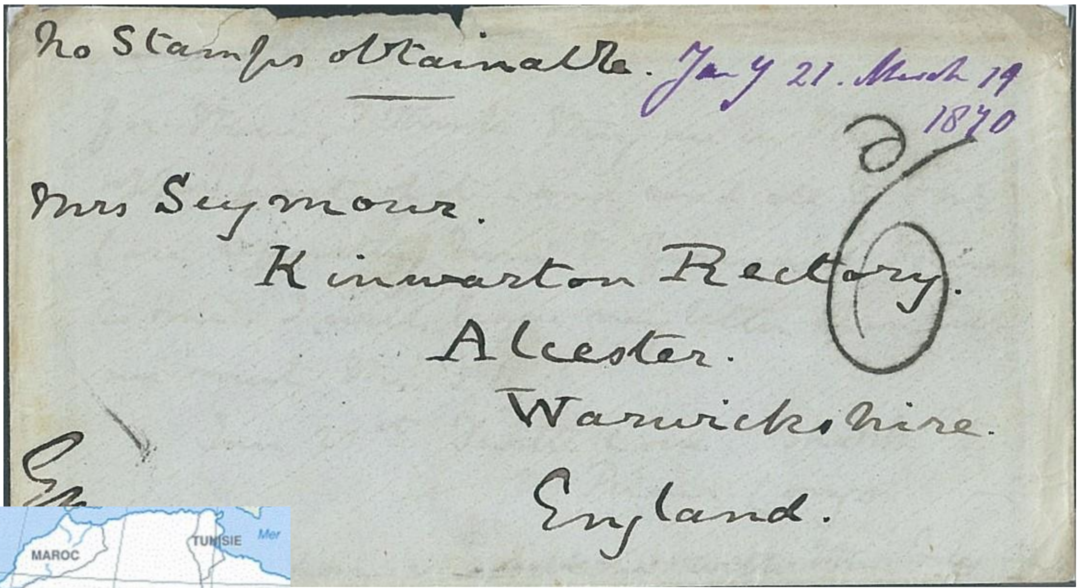
The newspaper *De Nieuwe Rotterdamse Courant* of June 7, 1868 reports the arrival, the day before, of the *Normandy* from Banana.

Letter sent from Dublin to the Officer Burke aboard the *H.M.S. Jaseur*, franked by a stamp of 6 pence, cancelled by the duplex stamp DUBLIN / OC 9/68.

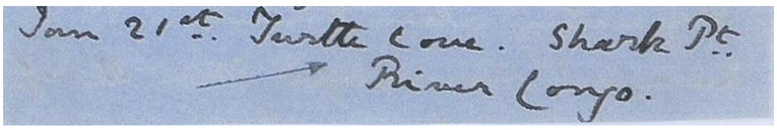
6 pence was the officers' postage rate for Ascension.



From St. Paul de Loanda « ...have Reached St. Paul de Loanda after 30 days At sea... » Seymour made a decription of Shark Point:
« ...the place we are now is just a sandy beach with thick bush above it and a few wretched native huts...»







Letter written at « Turtle Cove, Shark Point » (in front of Banana) 21 January 1870; handwritten note « No stamps obtainable », sent to Alcester. Surcharged 6 d at arrival (officer's concession rate). Reverse: « Liverpool Br.Packet 18 MR 70 », « Redditch MR 19 70 » and « Alcester MR 19 70 ».

The cover was handed over to the ship *Fly*. We read « ...we have met the Fly who takes our mails and one or two invalids".

1.2 Mail sent to the British anti-slavery patrols

The *H.M.S. Avon* was part of an anti-slavery fleet of 12 ships that patrolled the Gulf of Guinea. In 1877, it was close to the mouth of the Congo River. As a reprisal for the looting of the American merchant ship *Joseph Nickerson* by the natives, the crew helped burn down five villages along the river.

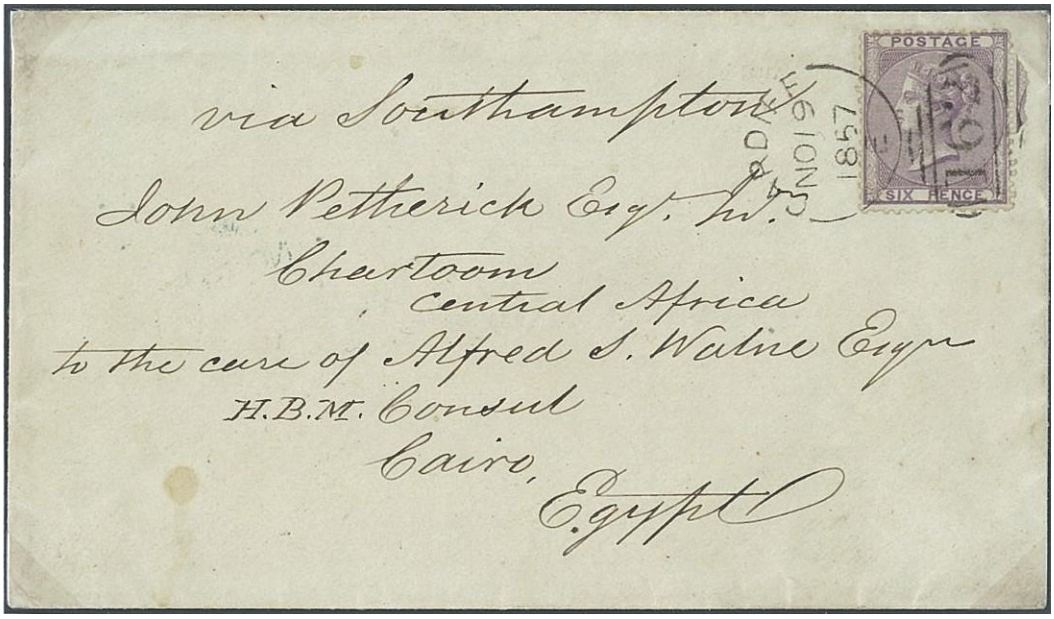
Letter posted by Sir Moses Montefiore (signed in the lower right-hand corner) to “Captain Leicester C. Keppel / H M S Avon / Sharks Point / River Congo/ West Coast Africa”.
The letter is franked with two 3 penny stamps (rate from 1.7.1857 until 14.4.1879 for normal letters sent to West Africa), cancelled by the duplex postmark “634” in Ramsgate on 21 March 1877.



2. British explorers mail

Several expeditions reached the Congo from the north-east via the Nile: Petherick in 1858.

2.1 John Petherick (1813-1882) was a mining engineer who worked for the Egyptian Pasha Mehmet Ali from 1845-1848 and settled in Khartoum (Sudan) in 1853, where he worked as an ivory trader and British consular official. He travelled widely in the Bahr-Al-Ghazal region in South Sudan, which was almost unknown during this period. In 1858, he was in Mundu (Faradje), in what would later become the Belgian Congo.



Letter sent from Cardiff on 19 November 1857 to “John Petherick, Chartoom, Central Africa to the care of Alfred Walne H.B.M. consul Cairo Egypt".

6d postage (rate from 1.1.1857 - 1.1.1866 for British sea mail). On the reverse, transit postmark in red added in London: “LONDON/PB/NO20/57”.

Transported by British passenger ship from Falmouth to Alexandria (no transit postmark) and taken by consular post to the Upper Nile (along the navigable section) and then by camel across the desert to Khartoum in Sudan. This letter reached the town in about February 1858 when Petherick was already travelling to the Congo.

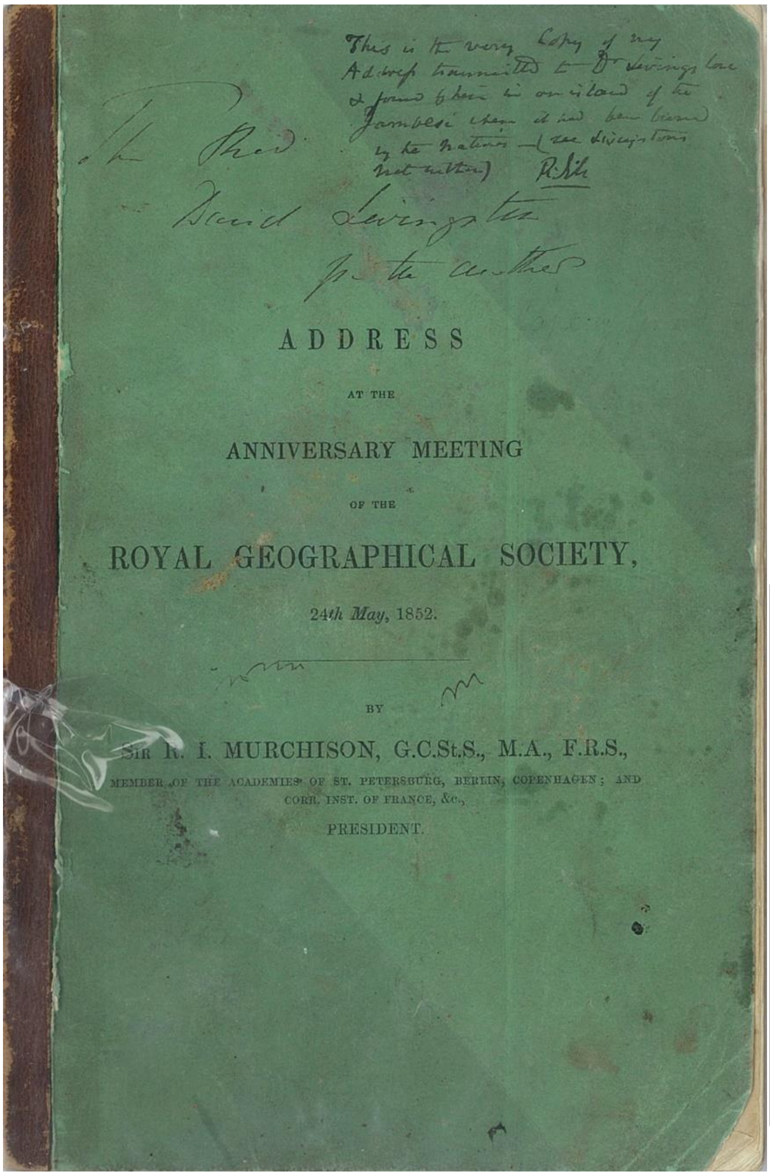
The oldest letter (with stamps) currently known to have been sent to the Sudan

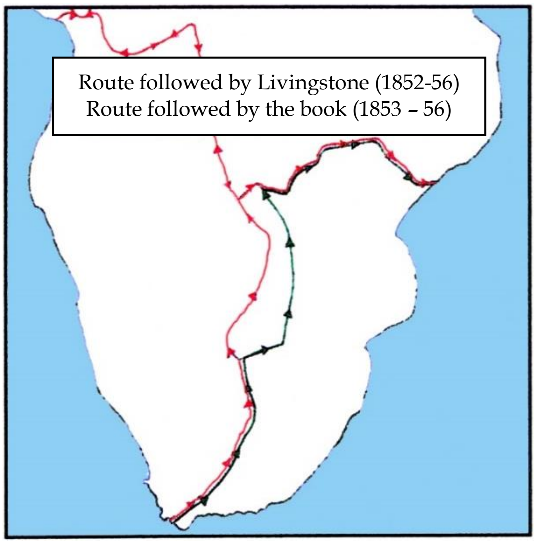
2.2 Livingstone. Starting in 1852, a few Europeans entered the territory of the future Congo from the south via Cape Town or from the east via Zanzibar, including Livingstone (between 1852-1873), Grant (1860), Stanley (1874 -1877), etc.

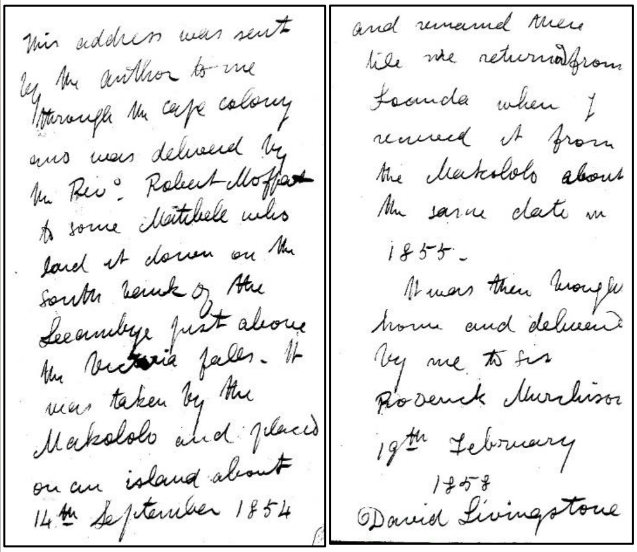
Dr David Livingstone undertook 3 expeditions between 1852-1873, during 2 of which he entered the territory of the future Congo.

1st expedition (1852-1856): Livingstone followed the course of the Kasai River in 1854
2nd expedition (1858-1864): the Zambezi expedition (entirely outside Congo)
3rd expedition (1866-1873): expedition around Lake Tanganyika

1st expedition
Roderick Murchison, president of the "Royal Geographical Society" decided to send a copy of his book to Livingstone in June 1852. Like all mail posted to Livingstone, the book was carried by native messengers to an agreed place: a small island in the middle of the Zambezi River, where it was buried under a baobab. At this point, Livingstone was on the banks of the river Kasai while travelling towards Dilolo (Congo). About one year later, after travelling from Luanda, Livingstone dug up all his mail from under this baobab and found this book, as well as other items. He tells this story on the cover pages of the book.

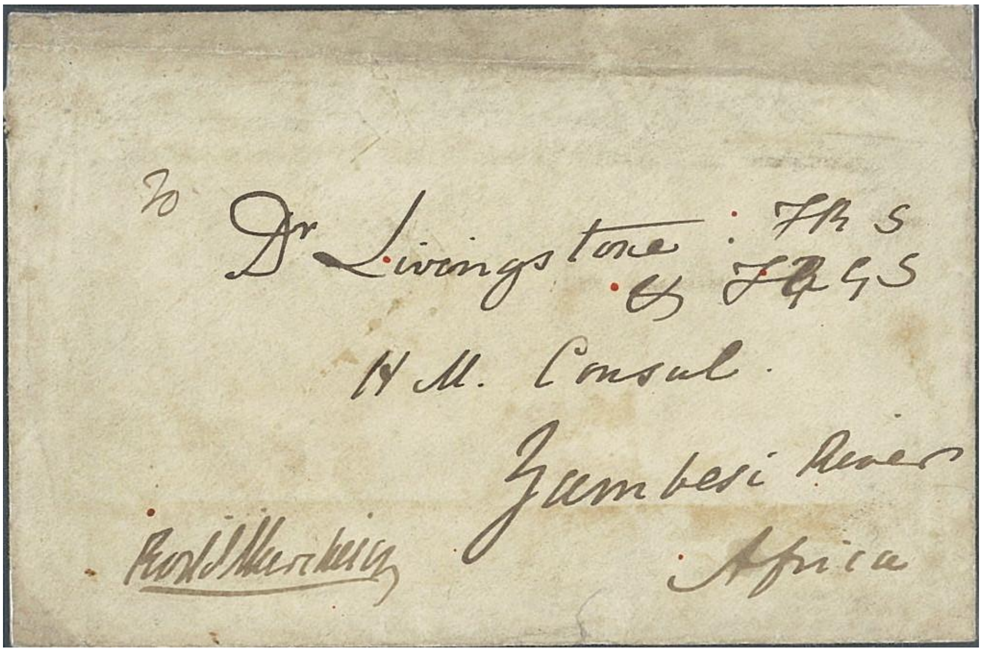






This address was sent by the author to me through the Cape colony and was delivered by the Revd. Robert Moffat to some Matebele who laid it down on the south bank of the Leeambye just above the Victoria falls. It was taken by the Makololo and placed on an island about 14th September 1854 and remained there till we returned from Loanda when I received it from the Makololo about the same date in 1855.
It was then brought home and delivered by me to Sir Roderick Murchison 19th February 1858
David Livingstone

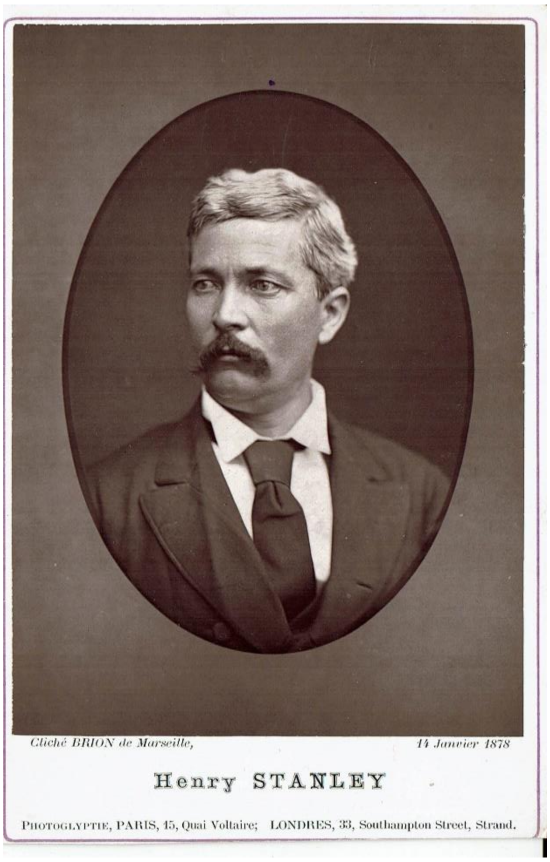
Extract of the diary

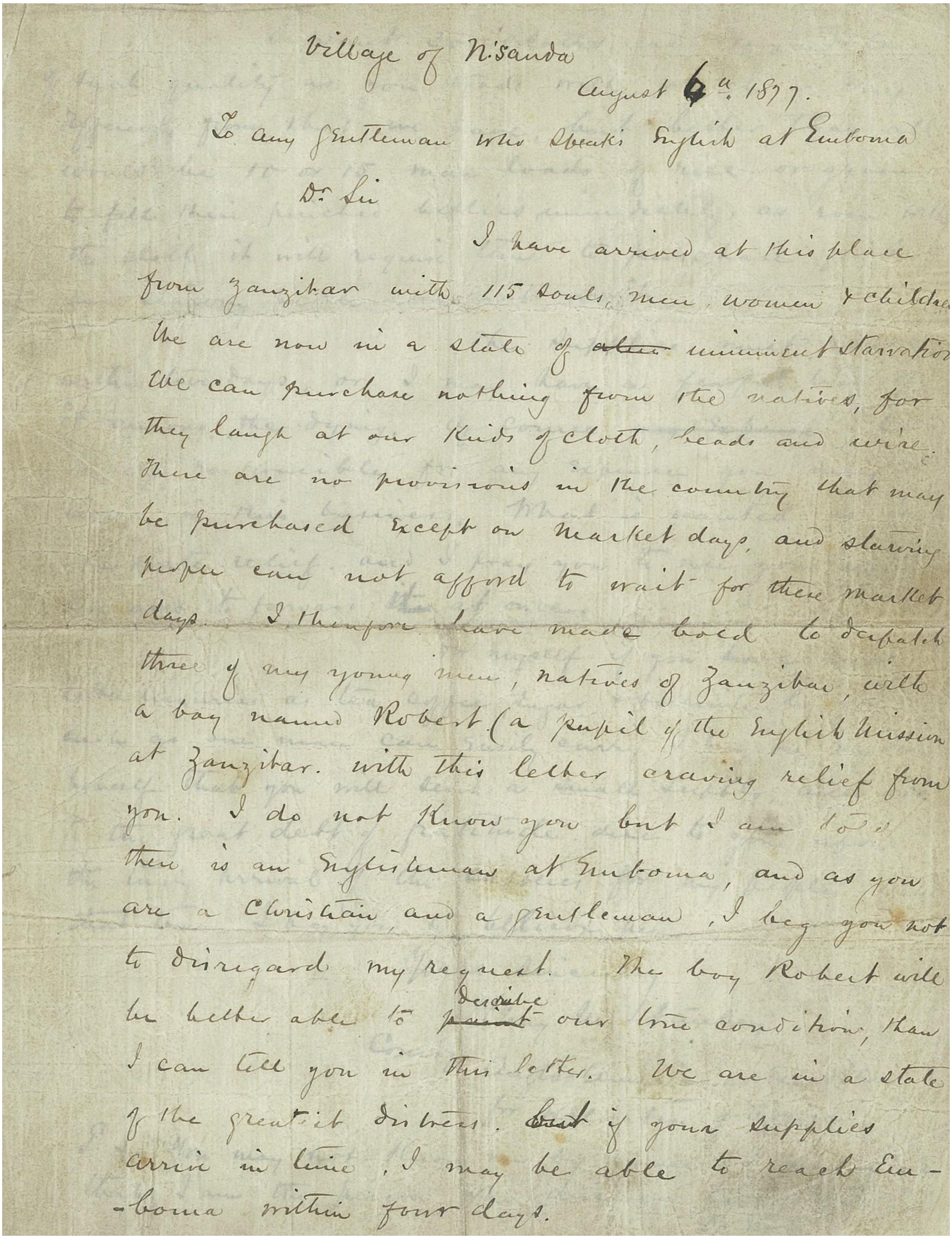


Unfranked and untaxed letter posted by Lord Murchison, president of the Royal Geographical Society on 1 January 1859 to Dr. Livingstone on the *Zambezi River* during his second expedition.

2.3 Henri Morton Stanley

A letter written by Henry Morton Stanley during his second expedition to the Congo - Letter written by Stanley at the "village of N'Sanda" on August 4th, 1877, in which, at the end of his forces, near Boma, he called for help " to any gentleman who speaks English at Embomma .... We are in state of imminent starvation. " He adds in postscript: "I am the person who discovered Livingstone." Following the sending of this letter, food was sent to him in time. If there had been no reaction, Stanley may have died there and the Belgian Congo might never have been born.





Village of N'Sanda
August 6th 1877.

To any Gentleman who speaks English at Emboma

Dr Sir

I have arrived at this place from Zanzibar with 115 souls, men, women & children. We are now in a state of ~~actua~~ imminent starvation. We can purchase nothing from the natives, for they laugh at our kinds of cloth, beads and wire. There are no provisions in the country that may be purchased except on market days, and starving people can not afford to wait for these market days. I therefore have made bold to despatch three of my young men, natives of Zanzibar, with a boy named Robert (a pupil of the English Mission at Zanzibar. with this letter craving relief from you. I do not know you but I am told there is an Englishman at Emboma, and as you are a Christian and a gentleman, I beg you not to disregard my request. The boy Robert will be better able to ~~paint~~ describe our true condition, than I can tell you in this letter. We are in a state of the greatest distress. ~~but~~ if your supplies arrive in time, I may be able to reach Em-boma within four days.

Letter written by Stanley at the "Village of N'Sanda" on 4 August 1877, in which he appealed for help from "any gentleman who speaks English at Emboma"

VILLAGE OF N'SANDA

AUGUST 4th 1877

To any gentleman who speaks English at Emboma

Dr. Sir,

I have arrived at this place from Zanzibar with 115 souls, men, women, and children. We are now in a state of imminent starvation. We can buy nothing from the natives, for they laugh at our kinds of cloth, beads and wire. There are no provisions in the country that may be purchased, except on market days, and starving people cannot afford to wait for these markets. I therefore have made bold to dispatch three of my young men, natives of Zanzibar, with a boy named Robert Feruzi of the English Mission at Zanzibar, with this letter craving relief from you. I do not know you, but I am told there is an Englishman at Emboma, and as you are a Christian and a gentleman, I beg you not to disregard my request. The boy Robert will be better able to describe our true condition, than I can tell you in this letter. We are in state of the greatest distress, but if your supplies arrive in time, I may be able to reach Emboma within four days.

I want 300 cloths, each 4 yards long, of such quality as you trade with, which is very different from that we have; but better than all would be 10 or 15 man loads rice, or grain to fill their pinched bellies immediately, as even with the cloths it will require time to purchase food, and starving people cannot wait.

The supplies must arrive within two days, or I may have a fearful time of it among the dying. Of course, I hold myself responsible for any expense you may incur in this business.
What is wanted is immediate relief, and I pray you to use your utmost energies to forward it at once.

For myself, if you have such little luxuries as tea, coffee, sugar, and biscuits by you, such as one man can easily carry, I beg on my own behalf that you will send a small supply, and add to the great debt of gratitude due to you upon the timely arrival of the supplies for my people. Until that time I beg you to believe me

Yours sincerely,

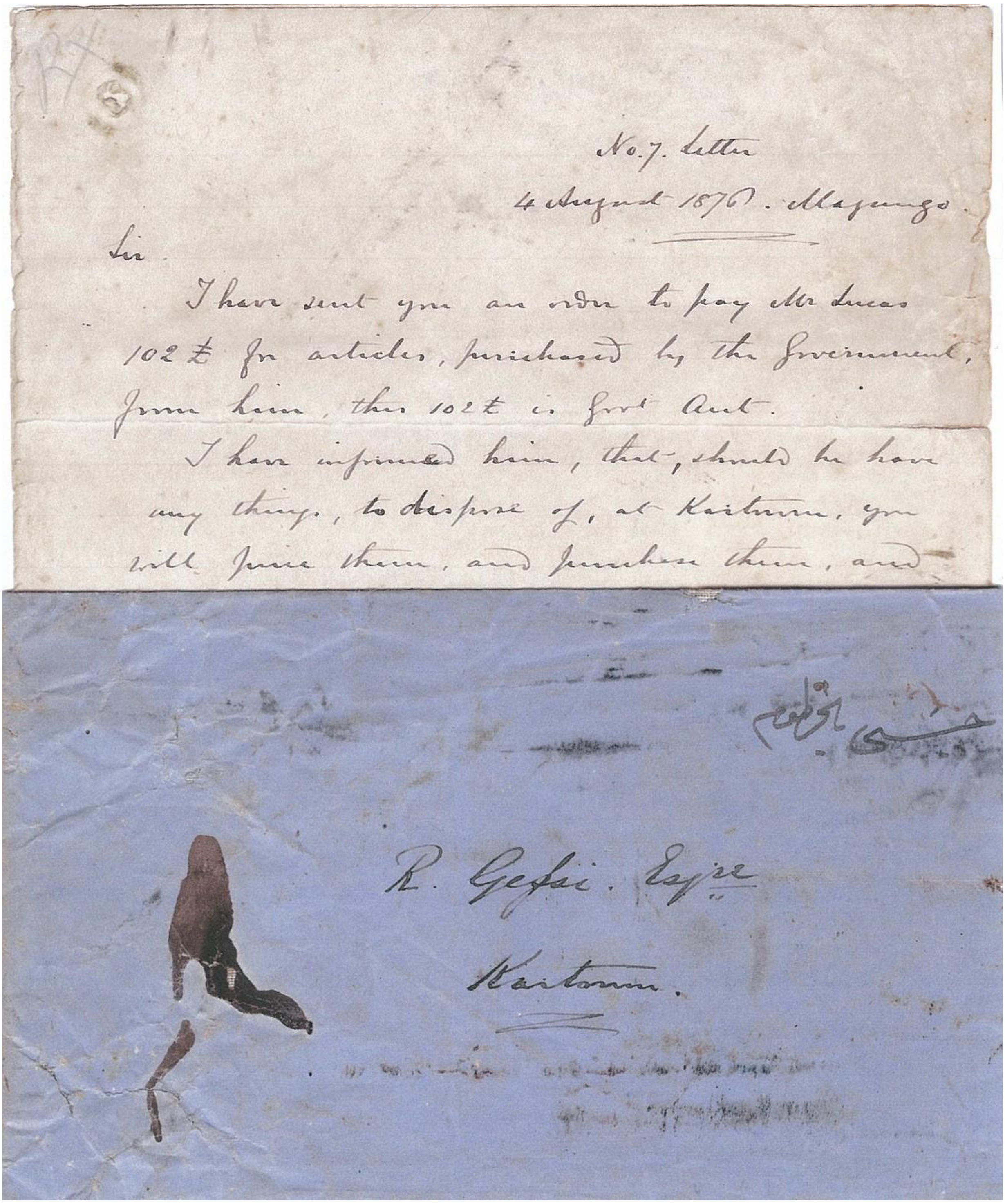
H.M. Stanley

Comdg - Anglo-American Expedition For Exploration of Africa.

P.S. You may not know me by name -I therefore add that I am the person that discovered Livingstone in 1871.
H.M.S.

2.4 Gordon

In 1873, he was appointed governor of the province of Equatoria in the Sudan. Between April 1874 and December 1876 he mapped the upper Nile and established a line of stations along the river as far south as present day Uganda. He was then promoted to governor general, where he asserted his authority, crushing rebellions and suppressing the slave trade.
North East Congo was part of the Province of Equatoria of Anglo-Egyptian Sudan. The governors of Equatoria, were the first residents in North East Congo.



No. 7. Letter
4 August 1876. Magungo.

Sir

I have sent you an order to pay Mr Lucas 102 £ for articles, purchased by the Government, from him, this 102 £ is Govt Acct.
I have informed him, that, should he have any things, to dispose of, at Kartoum, you will price them, and purchase them, and

R. Gessi. Esqre
Kartoum.

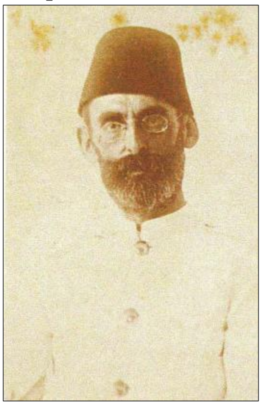
Letter written by General Gordon, Governor of Equatoria, on 4 August 1876 in Magungo (on the banks of Lake Albert) and sent to Khartoum.

The envelope bears a wax seal with the imprint of the personal seal of the “mandarin” Gordon, who was awarded this title by the Empress of China for saving her throne form the Taiping Rebellion in 1863.

3. The « Emin Pasha Relief Expedition » (1887-1889)

In 1886, Henri Morton Stanley led a rescue mission through the CONGO.

A committee composed of private persons in favor of a relief expedition was created, headed by William Mackinnon, who in December 1886 hired Henry Morton Stanley, who was still under contract with King Leopold II. Understanding the advantages could derive from it, the King of the Belgians Leopold II would that finance the "Emin Pasha Relief Expedition" himself. The King hoped to collect the fruits of his investment: to persuade Emin Pasha to work for him and get his hands on the province of Equatoria.

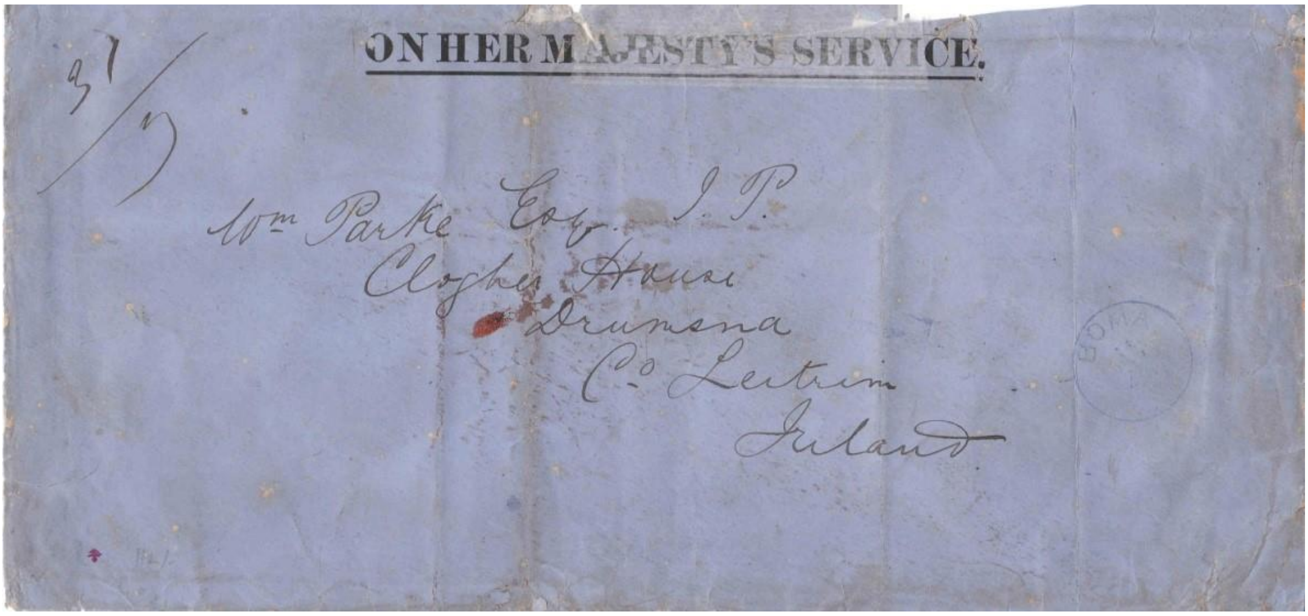


Emin Pasha

After having ‘rescued’ Emin Pasha, the expedition reached Zanzibar in 1889.

Only one letter has survived written by the expedition doctor, Dr Parke.

Dr Parke wrote to his father from Yambuya in the Congo in June 1887. The latter had the excellent idea of nothing the history of this letter sent by his son I a few lines on the back of the envelope.





Cancellation of the Boma post office applied on the front dated 14 July 1887. A transit mark was struck in Lisbon on 12 August and another on its arrival in Drumsna in Ireland on 16 August 1887.

4. Letters without intervention of the I.A.C. with British transit ship

4.1 Posted in Great Britain without postage stamps



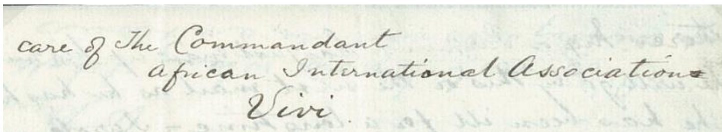
Letter written in Kinshasa (handwritten inscription: “From Congo River Stamps not procurable”) in October 1884, taken to England and posted without postage stamps in Peckham on 10 January 1885 where the charge of 2 pence was applied (charge for unfranked letters sent as domestic mail). On the reverse, arrival postmark: “London JA 10 85”.



Letter written in Kinshasa on 31 December 1884 and entrusted to a private individual who was travelling to England. Handwritten inscription: “From Congo River stamps not procurable”. The letter was posted in England without postage stamps and the charge of 2d was applied (rate for normal letters sent as domestic mail was 1d. Unfranked letters were taxed twice the normal rate). Transit postmark: “London S.W./ZX/MR 17/85”.
On the reverse: arrival postmark: “London W/MR18/85”.

4.2 Posted in Great Britain with postage stamps

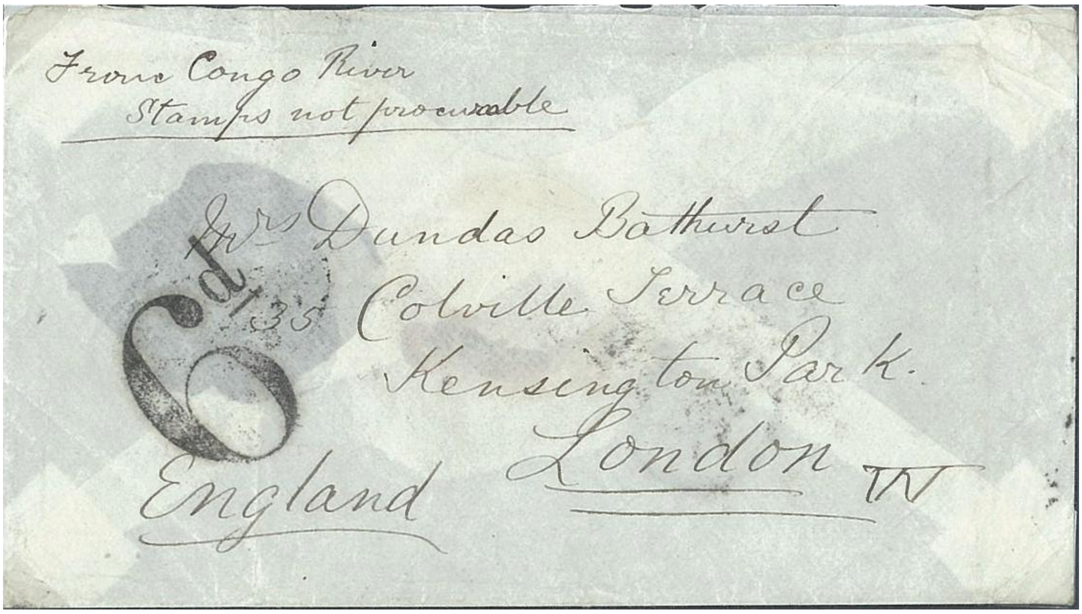




Letter written on 3 February 1884 at Vivi and given to the Commandant of A.I.A. (African International Association) and taken by him on his way back to England. At Liverpool, the letter was franked by 1 penny (domestic postage rate), cancellation « Liverpool M R 24 84 ».

4.3 By British ship Mail from Congo

This next letter was written two months later again from Vivi near Bathurst who makes the description of Stanley's visit on 23 April 1884. Stanley decided to transfer Vivi station to a better place on the other side of the valley.



Letter written at Vivi on 24 April 1884 and given to the steamer *Ville d'Anvers* with departure the day after for Banana where the mail was given to a British ship. Unfranked cover bearing a 6d tax paid stamp. On the back: "London JU 12 84".

Waterlow & Sons

1. Waterlow & Sons Ltd.


JAMES WATERLOW—FOUNDER

The company of Waterlow & Sons developed from the print shop owned by James Waterlow, which began to produce lithographic copies of legal documents at Birchin Lane, London in 1810 and printed postage stamps in London from 1852. It also printed banknotes, share certificates and posters. As the business prospered, he was joined by his sons Albert, Walter, Sydney and Alfred. James Waterlow died in 1876 and it became a limited company. Following a dispute due to professional differences, the brothers decided, in 1877, to split the company in order to form Waterlow & Sons Ltd and Waterlow Bros & Layton, the latter being headed by Alfred and his sons.



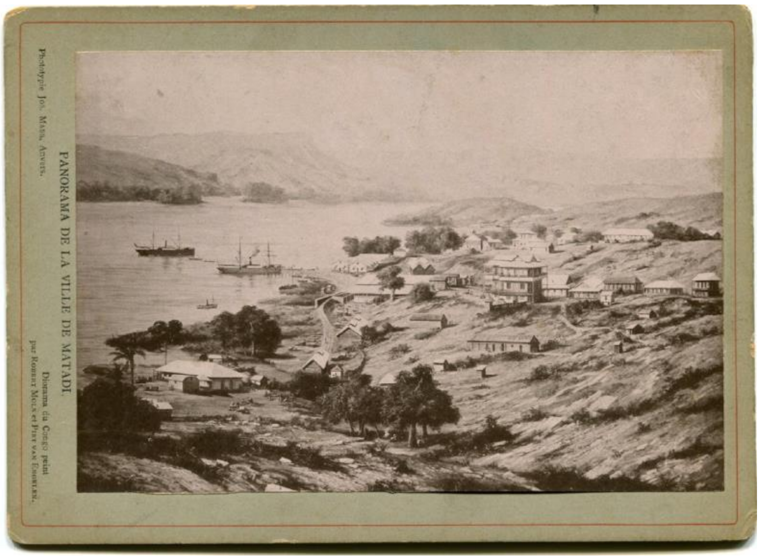
These two companies co-existed until 1920, when they merged under the name Waterlow & Sons Ltd. The company was acquired by Purnell & Sons on 9 January 1961 but, shortly after, Purnell sold the division of Waterlow that printed banknotes, postage stamps, traveller's cheques and bonds to De La Rue. In 2003, the De la Rue printing company recovered the business of printing banknotes for the Bank of England, which Waterlow & Sons had lost 75 years before.

Waterlow & Sons Ltd was dissolved in January 2009.



Trade with the Congo Free State and the Belgian Congo

In 1894, the administration of the Congo Free State wished to replace the stamps previously printed using the letterpress method, as it did not find them very attractive and, above all, they were very easy to imitate.
The previous year, the United States of America had issued a series of intaglio stamps in honour of Christopher Columbus, with scenes depicting the life of the explorer. King Leopold II liked the idea of issuing stamps with scenes representing the different stages of the "peaceful penetration" or specific landscapes from this part of Africa for propaganda purposes in the Congo.



The starting point was a diorama presented by the painters R. Mols and P. Van Engelen at the Antwerp Universal Exhibition in 1894.
As specialists in intaglio printing, Waterlow & Sons exhibited their work on a stand at the same exhibition and it goes without saying that they were chosen to create these new stamps.

Souvenir box from the diorama, Antwerp 1894.

2. Stamps printed by Waterlow & Sons

A. For the Congo Free State





1894. Various landscapes and subjects known as "Mols".
Bicoloured stamps: black centre and coloured frame
Period of validity: 25 November 1894 - 31 December 1900
0.05 Fr, sky blue frame, 0.05 Fr, brown frame
0.10 Fr, brown/red frame, 0.10 Fr, sky blue frame
0.25 Fr, yellow frame, 0.50 Fr, green frame
1.00 Fr, carmine, violet and dark lilac frame
5.00 Fr, brick red frame

Period of validity: 21 November 1896 - 31 July 1909
0.15 Fr, orange frame
0.40 Fr, green-blue frame

Period of validity: 25 May 1900 - 31 July 1909
0.05 Fr, green frame 0.25 Fr, blue frame
0.10 Fr, red frame 0.50 Fr, green olive frame



B. For the Belgian Congo

1909. Various landscapes and subjects known as the "Unilingual Mols".
Bicoloured stamps: black centre and coloured frame
Period of validity: 15 June 1909 - 31 March 1916
0.05 Fr, green frame 0.15 Fr, orange frame
0.10 Fr, red frame 0.50 Fr, olive green frame





1910. Various landscapes and subjects known as the "Bilingual Mols".
Bicoloured stamps: black centre and coloured frame
Period of validity: 1 February 1910 - 31 March 1916
0.05 Fr, green frame   0.15 Fr, orange frame
0.10 Fr, red frame   0.25 Fr, blue frame



Bicoloured stamps: black centre and coloured frame
Period of validity: 15 September 1910 - 31 March 1916
0.40 Fr, pale blue frame   1.00 Fr, lilac frame
0.50 Fr, olive green frame   5.00 Fr, brick red frame



1915. Various landscapes and subjects known as the "Modified Bilingual Mols".
Bicoloured stamps: black centre and coloured frame.
Period of validity: 1 October 1915 - 31 December 1921
0.05 Fr, green frame   0.40 Fr, carmine red frame
0.10 Fr, red frame   0.50 Fr, bistre frame
0.15 Fr, pale green frame   1.00 Fr, olive frame
0.25 Fr, blue frame   5.00 Fr, orange frame

1917. Various landscapes and subjects known as the "Modified Bilingual Mols", special edition.
Single colour stamps: black centre and frame
Period of validity: 600 unissued series
The reason why they were printed remains unknown.
0.05 Fr, 0.10 Fr, 0.15 Fr, 0.25 Fr,
0.40 Fr, 0.50 Fr, 1.00 Fr, 5.00 Fr black





1918. Various landscapes and subjects known as the "Red Cross".
Bicoloured stamps: blue centre and coloured frame
Period of validity: 15 May 1918 - 31 December 1921
0.05 Fr, green frame   0.40 Fr, carmine red frame
0.10 Fr, red frame   0.50 Fr, bistre frame
0.15 Fr, pale green frame   1.00 Fr, olive frame
0.25 Fr, blue frame   5.00 Fr, orange frame   10.00 Fr, green frame



1927. Cattle farm stamp known as the "Leys".
Single colour stamp: violet centre and frame
Period of validity: 1 February 1927 (postage stamps sent to Africa on 20.12.1926) - 31 December 1932.
0.45 Fr, violet





1942. Commonly used stamps known as the "Palm trees".
Bicoloured stamps: black centre and coloured frame
Period of validity: 1 January 1943 - 31 December 1952:

50,00 Fr, ultramarine and black
100,00 Fr, carmine and black





1943. Tax stamps ("Chiffres – taxe").
Single colour stamps
Period of validity: 30 June 1943 - 1957?

0.10 Fr, olive	0.50 Fr, green
0.20 Fr, blue	2.00 Fr, orange



1948. 50th anniversary of the "Leopoldville-Matadi Railway".
Bicoloured stamp: green-yellow centre and blue frame
Period of validity: 1 July 1948 - 31 December 1950

2.50 Fr, blue and green-yellow

C. For the Belgian Congo and Ruanda-Urundi



1925. Various subjects known as the "Colonial Campaigns".
Bicoloured stamps: black centre and carmine frame
Period of validity: 8 July 1925 - 31 December 1926
0.25 Fr + 0.25 Fr, predominantly in French, carmine frame
0.25 Fr + 0.25 Fr, predominantly in Dutch, carmine frame
Idem for Ruanda-Urundi





1942. Colonial War Fund ("Fond Colonial des œuvres de Guerre").
Single colour stamps
Period of validity: 17 February 1942 - 31 August 1942

Belgian Congo:	10.00 Fr + 40.00 Fr, predominantly in French, green
	10.00 Fr + 40.00 Fr, predominantly in Dutch, ultramarine
Ruanda-Urundi:	10.00 Fr + 40.00 Fr, predominantly in French, red
	10.00 Fr + 40.00 Fr, predominantly in Dutch, blue





1942. Commonly used stamps known as the "Palm Trees" ("Palmiers").
Single colour and Bicoloured stamps
Period of validity: 23 May 1942 - 31 December 1952
Belgian Congo: 0.05 Fr, bilingual. The other values are identical in colour on the predominantly French and Dutch issues.
The 20 Fr is garnet and black.
Ruanda-Urundi: the subject of the 0.75 Fr, 1.00 Fr and 1.25 Fr is different.
The 20 Fr is brown-yellow and black.

3. Stamps printed by Waterlow Bros & Layton

A. For the Congo Free State

1898. Various landscapes and subjects known as the "Mols".
Bicoloured stamps: black centre and coloured frame.
Period of validity: 4 May 1898 - 31 July 1909.
3.50 Fr, vermilion frame, 10.00 Fr, green frame





B. For the Belgian Congo

1910. Various landscapes and subjects known as the "Bilingual Mols".
Bicoloured stamps: black centre and coloured frame.
Period of validity: 1 December 1910 - 31 March 1916
3.50 Fr vermilion frame, 10.00 Fr, green frame





4. Vignettes by Waterlow & Sons Ltd



Waterlow & Sons printed vignettes that were similar to some stamps, in order to highlight the quality of their work, but they were intended for use as advertising. These vignettes were printed using the original dies, which were used to manufacture stamps, but the colours are different from those that were adopted, in order to avoid any confusion. They were often demonetised by a perforation in the lower left-hand corner and almost always bear an overprint on two lines: "WATERLOW & SONS LTD. / SPECIMEN", in blue or black "stick" Latin characters, with or without the full stop after "LTD". The word "specimen" is sometimes found on the first line.



“Mols” vignettes from the Congo Free State and Belgian Congo were printed on miniature sheets of nine unperforated vignettes, with full or partial perforation, during the 1920-25 period. These miniature sheets can be found without overprints and perforations, with the overprint in Latin characters or overprinted with narrow "stick" characters (with a full stop after LTD.).



Vignettes affixed to the same miniature sheet are also known to exist, with the "WATERLOW & SONS LIMITED" company name at the top and "LONDON, ENGLAND" or "LONDRES, ANGLETERRE" at the bottom. This type of miniature sheet would be presented to administrations, which would be likely to place an order. Several types are known to exist.





Miniature sheets also exist with the only stamp in unadopted colours, which must have been used to advertise the expertise of the printing company. They bear the dry stamp of "Waterlow & Sons".

B. "Specimen".

These unilingual "Mols" and "Bilingual" / "Modified Bilingual" series with the "SPECIMEN" overprint would have been used as presentations given to postal administrations.



C. Workshop proof.

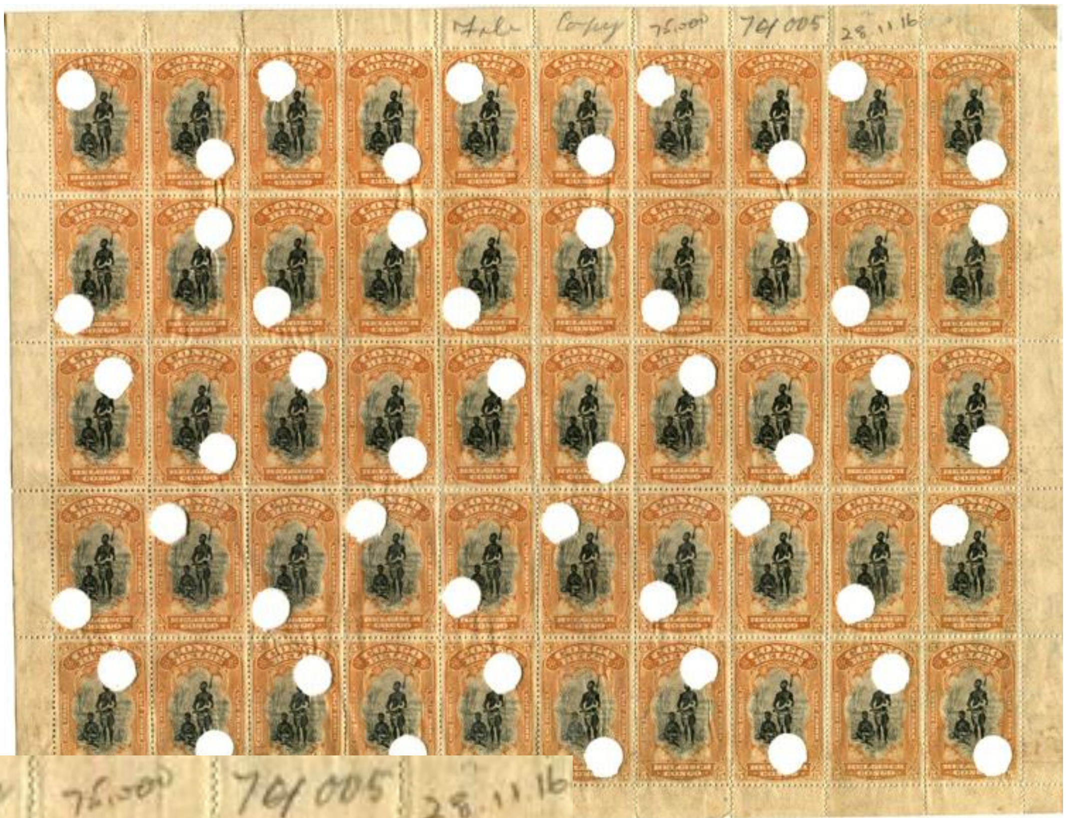
These proofs are from perforated and unperforated colour and layout essays.
They were always punched to show that they had been demonetised.

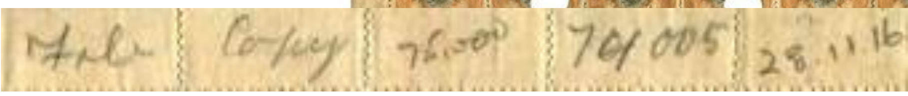




D. “Files-copy”.

“Files-copy” can be found in sheets of 4 stamps or strips and, more rarely, in full sheets. One sheet has been preserved by order of the post office, but several orders for the same stamp may exist depending on whether stocks ran out.
They come from the printer’s archives.
All of them have been punched when they were demonetised.





5. Waterlow Bros & Layton vignettes.

Waterlow Bros & Layton only printed essays with unadopted colours, which were either perforated or unperforated. It is thought that they were made for pleasure, as they do not include any indication of the company.





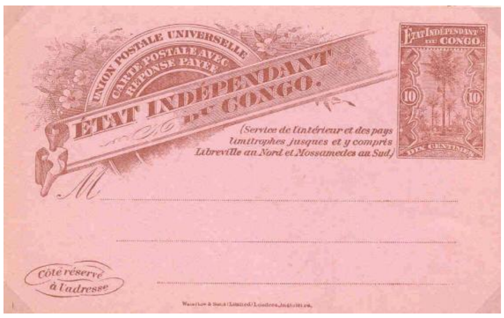


6. Postal stationery made by Waterlow & Sons.

Waterlow & Sons was also appointed to print postal stationery for the C.F.S. and the Belgian Congo. The numbers are those used in the classification by J. Stibbe (see Reference 7).
“C.F.S. Mols”. **Period of validity**: March 1897 - 31 July 1909.



14. Domestic and neighbouring countries service



16. Domestic and neighbouring countries service



18. Domestic and neighbouring colonies service



19. Domestic and neighbouring colonies service



17. International service



15. International service

"Unilingual stamps". Period of validity: 15 June 1909 - 31 December1910



26.



27.

"Bilingual stamps". Period of validity: 1 December 1910 - 31 March 1916



36.



37.

"Bilingual stamps".
Period of validity: 1 April 1911 - 31 March 1916



41.

“Bilingual stamps” Period of validity: ?? ?? 1911 - 31 March 1916



38.



39.



40.

“Bilingual stamps”. Period of validity: 1 November 1912 - 31 December 1921



42. Illustrated postcard



43. Illustrated postcard



“Modified bilingual stamps”. Period of validity: 1 October 1915 - 31 December 1921



44.



45.



46.



47.

Specimens: Postal stationery exists with the printer’s stamp and “SPECIMEN” mark.







Postage Rates

1.Postage rates from Belgian Congo to foreign countries

Type of mail / date of use	**01.01.86**	**01.04.10**	**01.04.20**	**01.03.21**
letter up to 20 gr (15gr 1886 - 1920)	0.50	0.25	0.25	0.50
per supplementary weight of 20 gr (15gr)	0.50	0.25	0.25	…
postcard	0.15	0.10	…	0.30
registration	0.50	0.25	…	0.50

type / date of use	**01.05.24**	**01.10.25**	**01.08.26**	**01.01.27**
letter up to 20 gr (15gr 1886 - 1920)	0.75	1.00	1.25	1.50
per supplementary weight of 20 gr (15gr)	0.40	0.60	0.75	0.90
postcard	0.45	0.60	0.75	0.90
registration	0.75	1.00	1.25	1.50

type / date of use	**01.05.27**	**01.01.31**	**01.02.34**	**01.09.40**
letter up to 20 gr (15gr 1886 - 1920)	1.75	2.00	2.50	2.75
per supplementary weight of 20 gr (15gr)	1.00	1.25	1.50	…
postcard	1.00	…	1.25	…
registration	1.75	2.00	2.50	…

type / date of use	**01.01.42**	**01.07.49**	**01.07.53**	**01.01.58**
letter up to 20 gr (15gr 1886 - 1920)	3.50	4.00	4.50	5.00
per supplementary weight of 20 gr (15gr)	2.00	2.40	2.50	3.00
postcard	2.00	2.40	2.50	3.00
registration	3.50	4.00	6.00	…

2.Airmail surcharge from Belgian Congo to foreign countries

September 1932
Newspaper *L'Essor colonial et maritime* (september 8th, 1932)
The Katanga Flying Club having obtained the concession for the carriage of mail by air from Elisabethville to Brohen Hill, three weeks sufficed now to correspond back and forth between Belgium and the capital of Katanga. For connections to the Broken Hill - Elisabethville airline connection, they must be prepaid at 7 francs per 10 grams of air tax in addition to the normal postal charge.
Correspondence destined to the Imperial Airways route may, however, continue to be franked from the old air postage rate of 5 francs per 10 grams, but then will be transported as usual by the ordinary route from the Rhodesian stop on the British line in Katanga.
It can be deduced that the air postage rate due to the aeroclub is 2 F per 10 g.
(www.congoposte.be)

Feb 15th, 1933
Decree n° 13/P.T. of February 15th, 1933
Notwithstanding the ordinary postage rates established by the ministerial decree of November 19th, 1930 and those for airmail provided for by the decree of May 21st, 1929, articles of correspondence of all kinds deposited in the Colony destined for abroad and which must be transported by air from London to Cape Town, shall be liable to the surcharges listed below:
Europe, and countries for which correspondence is channeled through it:
3 francs per fraction of 5 grams.

airmail to Great Britain	weight	airmail fees			
		Belgium France Congo	Juba	Entebbe Dodoma	Broken-Hill
June 1st, 1935	5 grs	3,50	3,50	3,50	3,50
Sept 1st, 1940	5 grs	5,00	5,00	5,00	5,00

airmail to Great Britain	weight	airmail fees	
		via	Via
		BOAC	PAA
Jan 1st, 1942	5 grs	6,75	21,75

Sept 1st, 1944
Airmail rate to UK = 10 Fr / 5 gr

Nov 27th, 1944
Airmail rate to UK = 6 Fr / 5 gr

Dec 15th, 1945
Airmail rate to UK = 7 Fr / 5 gr by Belgian or French airlines

Sept 15th, 1947
Airmail rate to UK = 4.50 Fr / 5 gr

Feb. 15th, 1949
Airmail rate to UK = 4 Fr / 5 gr

July 1st, 1953
Airmail rate to UK = 3 Fr / 5 gr

3.UK postage rates to Belgian Congo

1886 - 4d per 1/2 oz.

1891 - 2 1/2d per 1/2 oz.

1907 - 2 1/2d per 1 oz.

1921 - 3d per 1 oz.

1923 - 2 1/2d per 1 oz.

1940 - 3d per 1 oz.

1950 - 4d per 1 oz.

1957 - 6d per 1 oz. - this rate was still valid in 1960 at the time of Congo Independence

4. Airmail UK postage rates to Belgian Congo

1930 - 8d per oz.

1931 - 8d per 1/2 oz.

1933 - 8d per 1/2 oz. to Leopoldville; 1/3d per 1/2 oz. to Elisabethville (via Rhodesia)

1934 - 36 as above

1937 - 39 - 8d per 1/2 oz. or 1/3d per 1/2 oz. via France

1945 (September) - 1/3d per 1/2 oz.

January 1947 - 1/- per 1/2 oz.

May 1952 - 1/3d per 1/2 oz.

October 1966 - 1/6d per 1/2 oz.

Covers from Belgian Congo to UK, (1886-1960)

1st issue of 1886

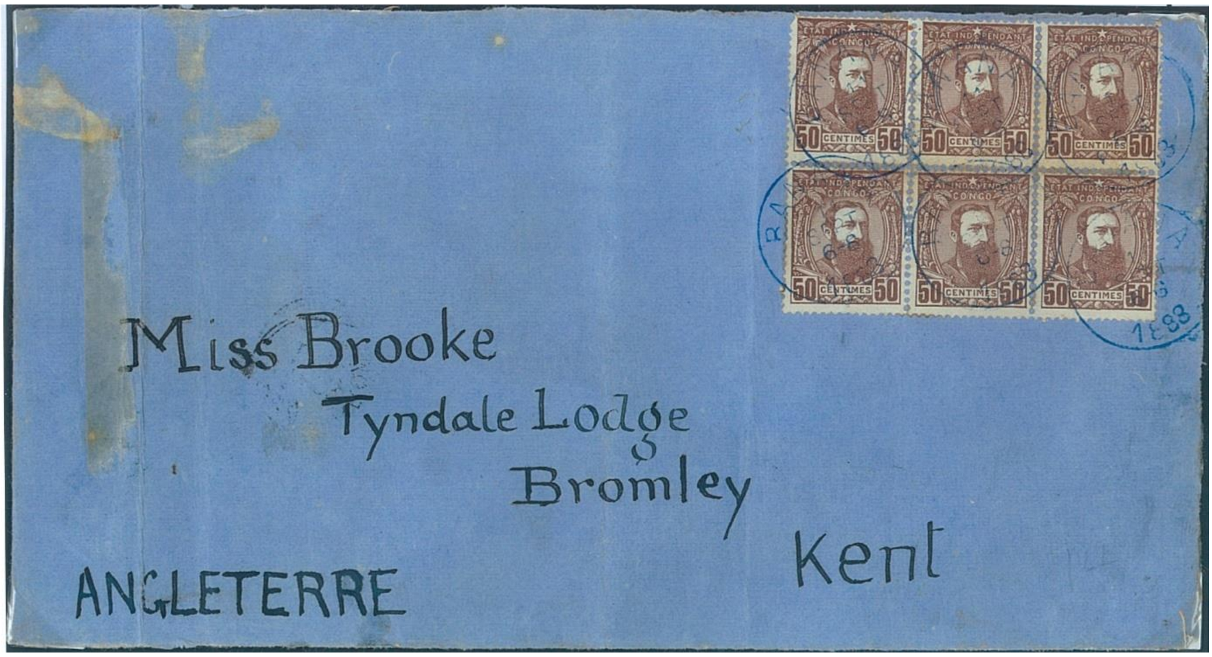




Postal stationery at 15c. (Catalogue Stibbe nr 2) written at Leopoldville in February 1888 and cancelled at Boma 13th March 1888 to London/UK where it arrived 16 April 1888. Transit through Banana 15 March and Lisboa / Portugal 13 April (carried by Portuguese ship).

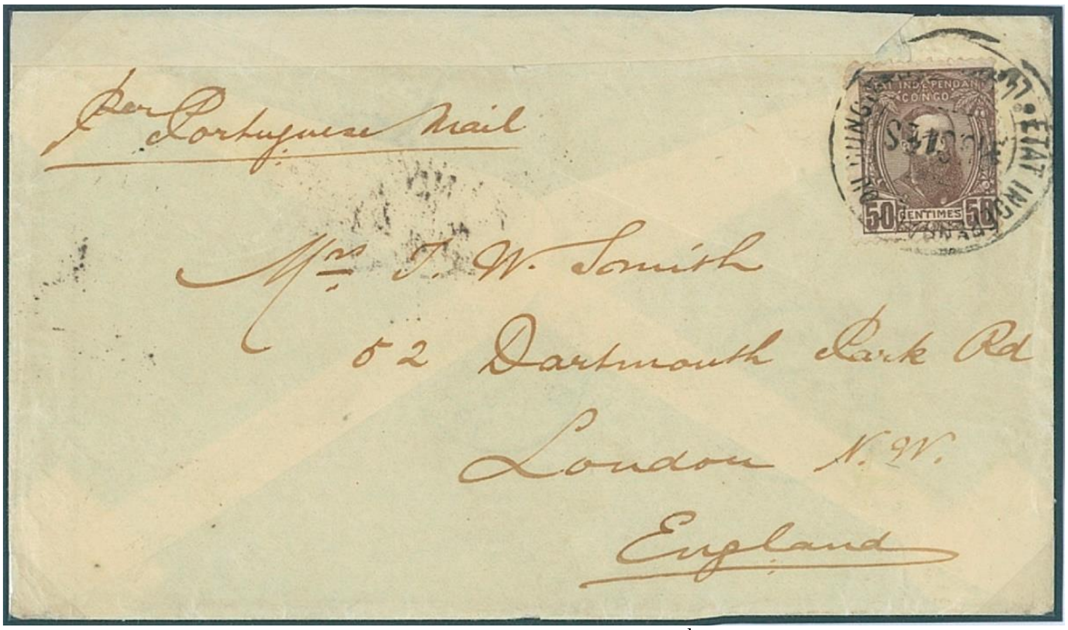
Postage rate for postal stationery: 15c.

2nd issue of 1887



Cover (front) sent from Banana on September 1st, 1888 to Bromley / Kent / UK where it arrived on October 17th, 1888.

Postage rate: 50c./15g. → 6 x 50c. = 3Fr. (6 ports weight)
Franked by a block of 6 of the 50c. brown-red 2nd issue (1887)



Cover sent from Lukungu (Mail concentration center) on April 17th, 1890 to London / UK where it arrived 15 April 1890 (Transportation request by Portuguese mailboat).

Postage rate: 50c./15g.
Franked by a single 50c. brown-red 2nd issue (1887)

Postal Stationery – Leopold II issue (1892)





Postal stationery sent from Albertville (on Lake Tanganyika) on June 23th, 1898 to Serk / Channel Island / UK with transit Stanleyville (8 Aug.), Leopoldville (3 Sept.), Boma (10 Sept.) and Lisboa / Portugal.

International postage rate (01.01.1886) = 15c for postcard – postal stationery (Stibbe nr 11).

Congo Free State – Mols issue (1900)

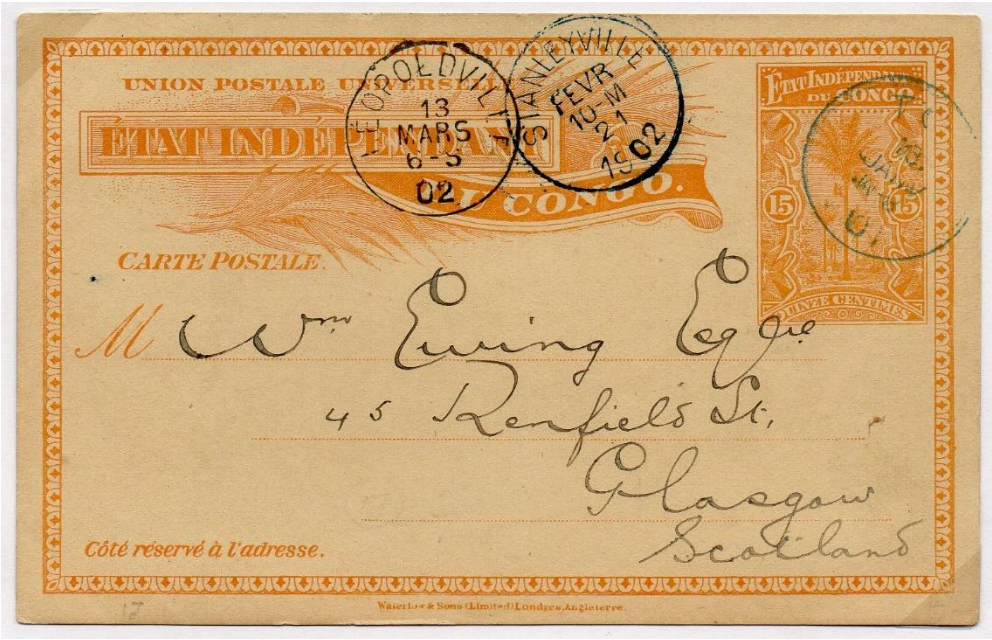


Cover sent from Matadi on August 1st, 1908 to Stonehaven / Scotland where it arrived on August 24th. Transit by Southampton Ship Letter on 22 August (Carried on a British ship).

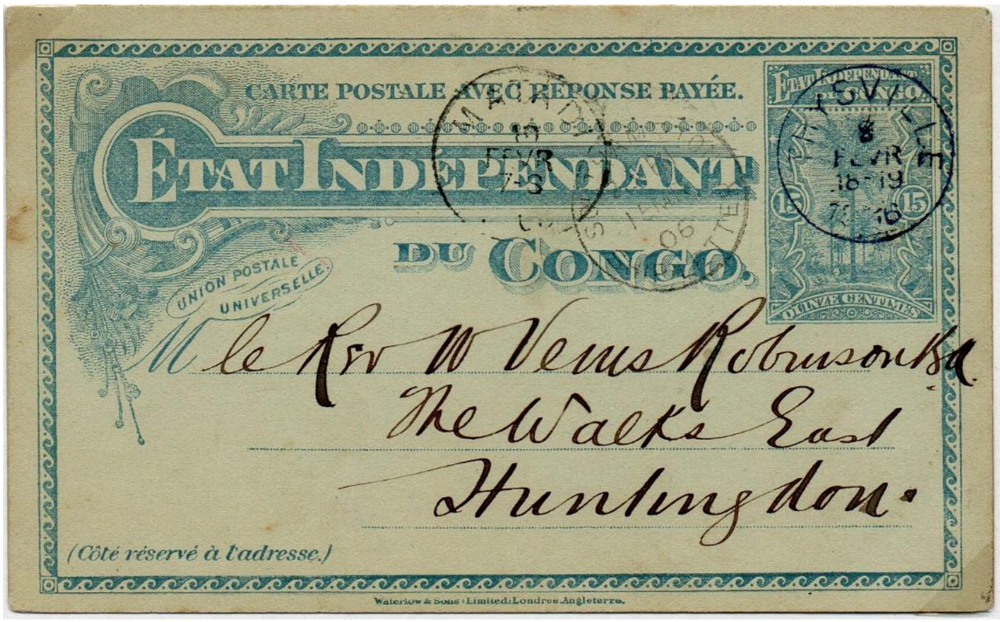
Postage rate: 50c./15g. → 2 x 50c. = 1Fr. (2 ports weight).

Franked by 50c., 40c. and 10c. Mols issue (1900)

Postal stationery Mols issue



Postal stationery sent from Toa (on Lake Tanganyika) on January 13th, 1902 (error of date, 1901 instead of 1902 + hours inverted) to Glasgow / Scotland / UK with transit through Stanleyville (21 Feb.) and Leopoldville (13 March)
International postage rate (01.01.1886) = 15c for postcard – postal stationery (Stibbe nr 15)



Postal stationery sent from Thysville on February 8th, 1906 to Huntingdon / Cambridgeshire / UK with transit Matadi (10 Feb.) and Southampton Ship Letter (March 15th , 1906)
International postage rate (01.01.1886) = 15c for postcard – postal stationery (Stibbe nr 17 – demand card)



Registered cover sent from Banza-Boma on 24 August 1903 to London / UK.
At that time, registration was available only in the Lower Congo at a few postoffices (Banana, Boma, Matadi, Leopoldville); for the remainder of Congo, a special service was created: the "ENREGISTRE".
Here below the text of postal decree creating that particular service, from André De Cock's book "*Le Congo Belge et ses marques postales*" page 72/73: ("*Belgian Congo and its postal marks*")

Postal instructions according to decree of January 25th, 1898 on Creation of the "*Enregistré* " service.
"According to the current information from our postal service, the deposit of an ordinary correspondance at the post office and its travel to its destination is not verified by any document. In case of loss or delay, the investigation will therefor often remain, given those conditions, unfruitful."

"Given several requests, the Government has investigated what could be done to provide more security for the sending and receiving of correspondence, however without generalising such registration service as the Administration could not, under the current circumstances, assure such responsibility in the Upper-Congo."

"It is for this purpose that a decree of the Secretary of State, on January 25th, 1898, establishes the "*Enregistré*" Service. This wording was chosen in order to avoid confusion between this specific service and the regular registration service, which is something completely separated and different."

The following instructions were given to assure the implimentation of this decree: "by paying a supplementary postage of 15c. per item, the sender of a correspondence can ask, in locations where no registration service is available, to be given a written acknowledgment of receipt of the deposited letter. Such an item is to be specially mentioned on the travel sheet of the despatch in which it is included."

This provision of article I shall be implemented immediately in all sub post offices, except in those of Banana, Boma and Matadi (1) where such "*enregistré*" has no reason to be created as there regular registration exists.

An "*enregistré*" letter for interior sending will pay a postage due of 15c. + 15c.("*enregistré*") = 30c.

« *enregistré* » is a domestic service but can however also be applied to correspondance to foreign countries, till the moment it enters into the international post service. Such mail can receive an acknowledge of deposit at its starting post office and this should be indicated on the travel sheet accompanying such despatches between the post office of origination and to the exchange post office (Boma or Banana).

Such "*enregistré*" item is and will remain an ordinary mail item during its travel in the international post service, unless it has been registered as such at one of the post offices authorized to receive such letters.

Thus the sender can, in an sub post office in the interior, request an "*enregistré*" treatment for an item to a foreign country; the postage due will be 50c. (common rate to a foreign country) + 15c. (extra due for "*enregistré*"). When such item arrives in the lower Congo it should be registered, by an agent mandated by the sender, with payment of the normal registration fee of 50c. If the sender has neither an agent nor a person mandated thereto in the lower Congo, or if such agent can not be timely advised or made aware of the need to register that correspondence in transit, the post office in the interior may accept , as long as the total postage due of 1.15 fr is being paid (3), an item of correspondance in an "*enregistré*" condition and to be registred at Boma; in such case, it will mention, the following not on the sheet of advice (travel sheet) : " to be registered at Boma post office, postage paid" + the sender's name.

The administration bears no responsibility in case of loss or delay in transmission of an "*enregistré*" item. It also deemed it useless to make registers reporting delivery of such items to the addressee and approved the establishment of special registers for deposits only, with labels numbered 1 to 500; the receipt detached from those registers will constitute the sender's receipt.

It neither appears useful to update or adapt the text on the sheets of advise presently used in the interior relationship between post offices; it will suffice that the postman cancels with large pen strokes the word "recommandé" found on front of these sheets and replace it with the word "*enregistré*".

Ad hoc cancels for striking the word "*enregistré*" on the cover of items submitted to this formality, shall be sent shortly to all sub post office, together with the special registers. The "*enregistré*" number will be transcribed (in hand-writing) by the postman, next to the "*enregistré*" marking.

The above instructions will be given to all postal agents concerned.

The Governor General,   F. FUCHS

(2)(3) see below, comments and updatings of the decree

As from March 15th, 1900   Léopoldville becomes a principal post office (in the past, it was a sub-post office) and thus becomes the first registration post office on the path of mails from the interior.
No Mols stamp was created or issued to make up, using a single stamp, for this postage rate (1.15 fr); this "*enregistré*" service was indeed to be temporary, created only for only a "few" demand.

Letters to an international destination and which had to be registered at the first post office where registration was available, are generally (3) bearing stamps covering the complete postage rate and were put on by the sender, jointly perhaps with the mention "to be registered at Leopoldville"; we have never seen any uprating of registration's stamps, by a mandated agent at Boma or later at Leopoldville. (2)

However, some senders have made their letters only on "enregistré", without registration; whether on account of practice's unthankfulness either for protecting their letters during only the Congo's travel. We can thus see the mention, hand-written at Leopoldville: "postage rate insufficient for registration"

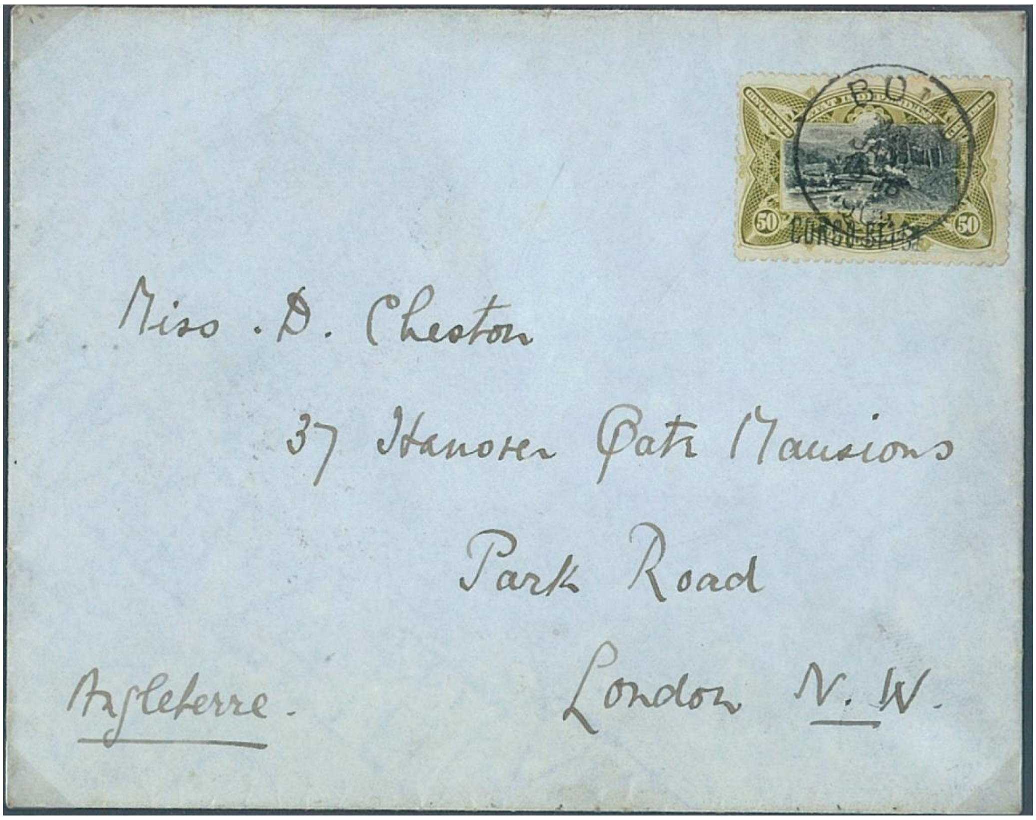
No postal form has yet been seen with an "*enregistré*" mark, neither mentioned on a travel sheet, nor on an acknowledgment of receipt (registration); neither was an acknowledgment of "enregistration", ….

The Fuch's postal decree gives us the starting date for launching the "*enregistré*" service, but no decree mentions its end; only the progress of the registration's penetration into the Upper-Congo determined the progressive limitation of its use.

The determination of first known dates for introduction of the registration in each of the respective post offices in the Upper-Congo could determine the limits of use of the "*enregistration*" option. However, it would seem that in middle of the Congo, introduction of the registration had been completed around 1905 , as was by 1907 in the Upper-Congo. In 1909, the post offices of Belgian Congo did not offer any "*enregistration*" service.

This cover was posted at Banza-Boma with an express registration request by the sender. However, the letter weighed 18 grammes (see black ink note at top left corner "18/2") = 2 step of postal rate (per 15 gr). The total correct rate (since 01.01.1886) was therefor 2 x50c + 50c for registration = 1.50 Fr. Exactly the amount covered by the the stamps on the cover.
The postman of Banza-Boma has first applied the ***ENREGISTRE*** mark (probably carried at the post office by a native) but, after the weighing of the letter, he cancelled that mark (as the *ENREGISTRE* service required 15c more). The cover has therefor made the first part of its journey as a normal letter without any ENREGISTRE nor REGISTRATION service.

Mols local overprint issue (1909)



Cover sent from Boma on 18 January 1909 to London / UK.

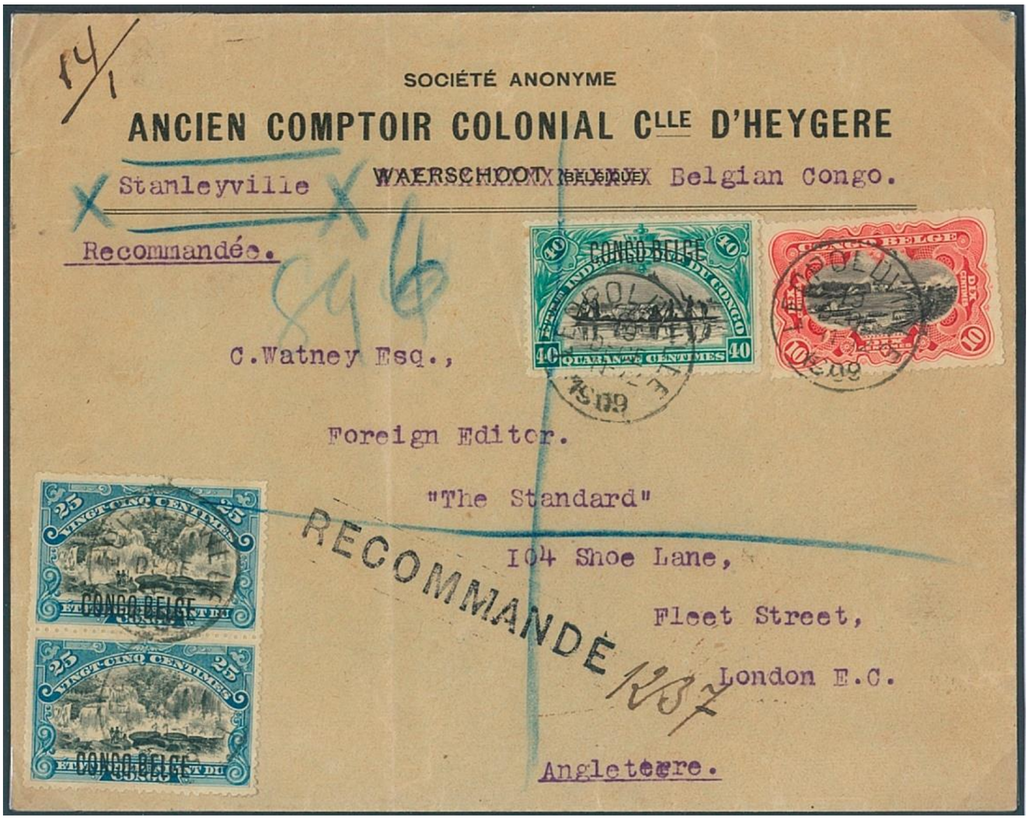
Postage rate (01.01.1886): 50c./15gr.
Franked with 50c. olive with CONGO BELGE local overprint type L6

Mols "PRINCES" issue – typographic CONGO BELGE overprint (1909)

Registered cover sent from Leopoldville on 19 December 1909 to London / UK.

Postage rate: 50c./15g.
Registration: 50c.

Franked with 25c. blue (vertical pair) 1909 typographical overprint + 10c. carmin Unilingual issue + 40c. blue-green **Prince** 1909 typographic overprint (these stamps are scarce on cover).





Cover sent from Thysville on April 1st, 1910 to Bromborough / Cheshire/ UK where it arrived on 24 April 1910. Transit by Matadi on 2 April.
Postage rate: 25c./15gr. (new postage rate on April 1st, 1909 = First day cover)
Franked by 15c. ochre 1909 typographic overprint + 10c. carmine 1909 typographic overprint **Prince.**

Postal Stationery Mols – surcharged 1910 issue





Postal stationery sent from Sakania (Katanga district) on September 28th, 1910 to London / UK with transit through Bulawayo Station / Southern Rhodesia – it took the railway from Elisabethville to Capetown.
International postage rate (April 1st, 1910) = 10c for postcard – postal stationery of Unilingual 1909 issue surcharged "10" (hand surcharge) with dark red ink in center of the stamp – scarce, usually with black ink at bottom place)

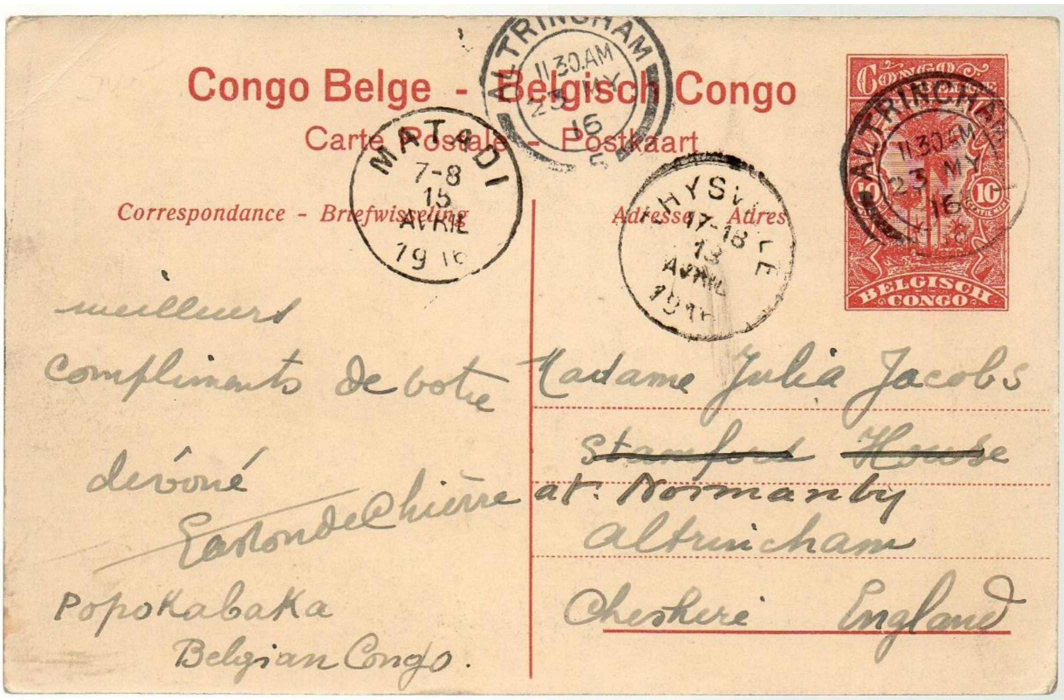
Unilingual issue (1909)



Cover sent from Boma on 10 February 1912 to the American Consulate General in London / UK where it arrived on 13 March 1912.

Postal rate: 25c./15g. → 4 x 25c. = 1Fr. (4 steps of rate)
Franked by a pair of 50c. olive Unilingual 1909 issue.

Postal stationery – picture postcard



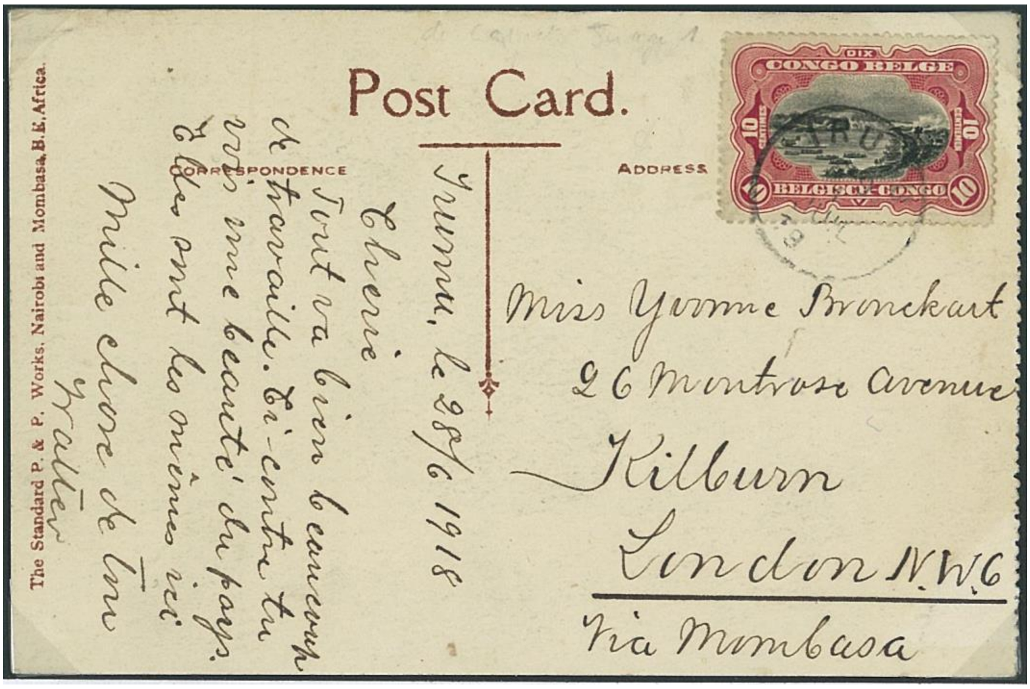
Postal stationery written at Popokabaka to Altrincham / Cheshire / UK with transit Thysville (13 April 1916) and Matadi (15 April) – the stamp was cancelled upon arrival on May 23th, 1916.
International postage rate (April 1st, 1910) = 10c for postcard – postal stationery with picture (Stibbe nr 43).

Bilingual 1915 issue – from booklet sheetlet (of 10 stamps)

Picture postcard (from the British East Africa) sent from Irumu on July 1st, 1918 to London / UK – routing request “Via Mombasa”.

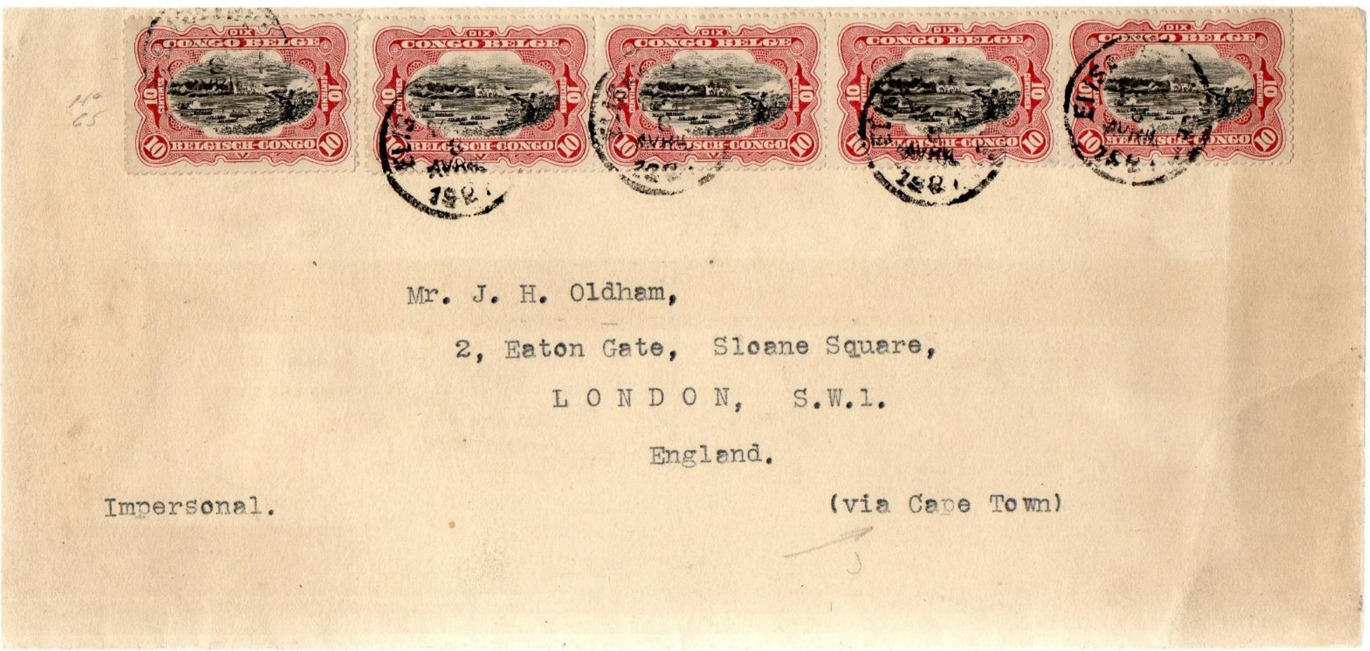
International postage rate (April 1st, 1910) : 10c for postcard.

Franked with 10c carmine (re-entered sky plate) – from first booklet printing (position Alpha 8).



A picture postcard of the British East Africa, probably bought by the sender at Mombasa – it was the normal route from Europe to the East of Belgian Congo, where Irumu is situated.

Mols Bilingual 1915 issue

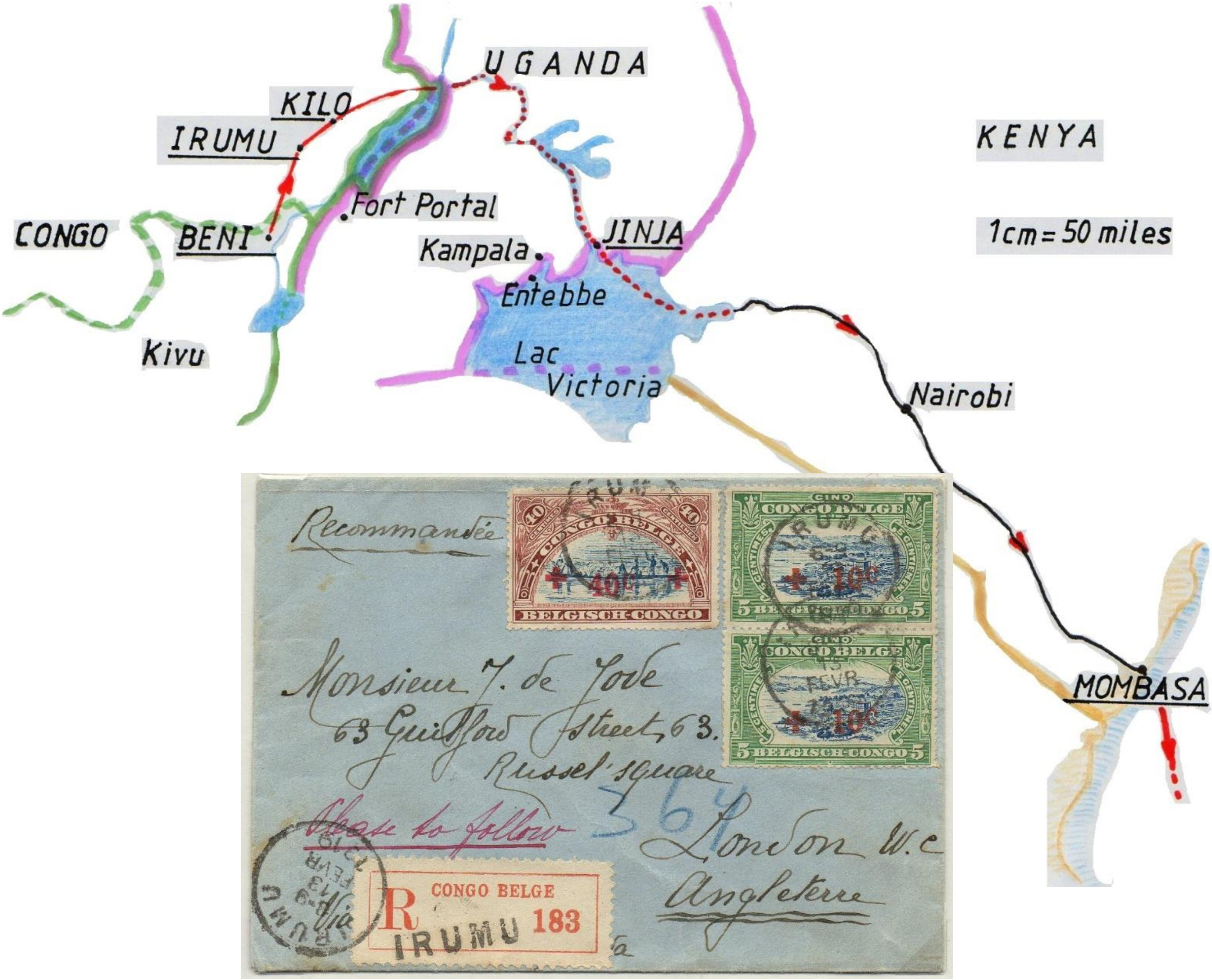


Business cover sent from Elisabethville on April 8th, 1921 to London SW1 / UK – Capetown route requested by sender.

International postage rate (from March 1st, 1921): letter (50c / 20 gr).

Franked with a strip of 4 + single of 10c carmine Mols Bilingual 1915 issue (first plate, sky not re-entered) – a very fine use of this small value, initially issued for postcard rate.

Mols Red-Cross 1918 issue





Cover written at Beni and posted at Irumu on February 13th, 1919 to London / UK with transit Kilo / Belgian Congo (14 Feb.), Jinja / Uganda (10 March – scarce transit mark BC cover) and Mombasa Registered (15 March).

International postage rate (from April 1st, 1910): letter (25c / 15gr) + registration (25c) = 50c.

Franked with a vertical pair of 5c+10c and 40c+40c Red Cross 1918 issue / on the reverse a 5c green stamps of the bilingual 1915 issue has been put to ensure the closure of the envelope.

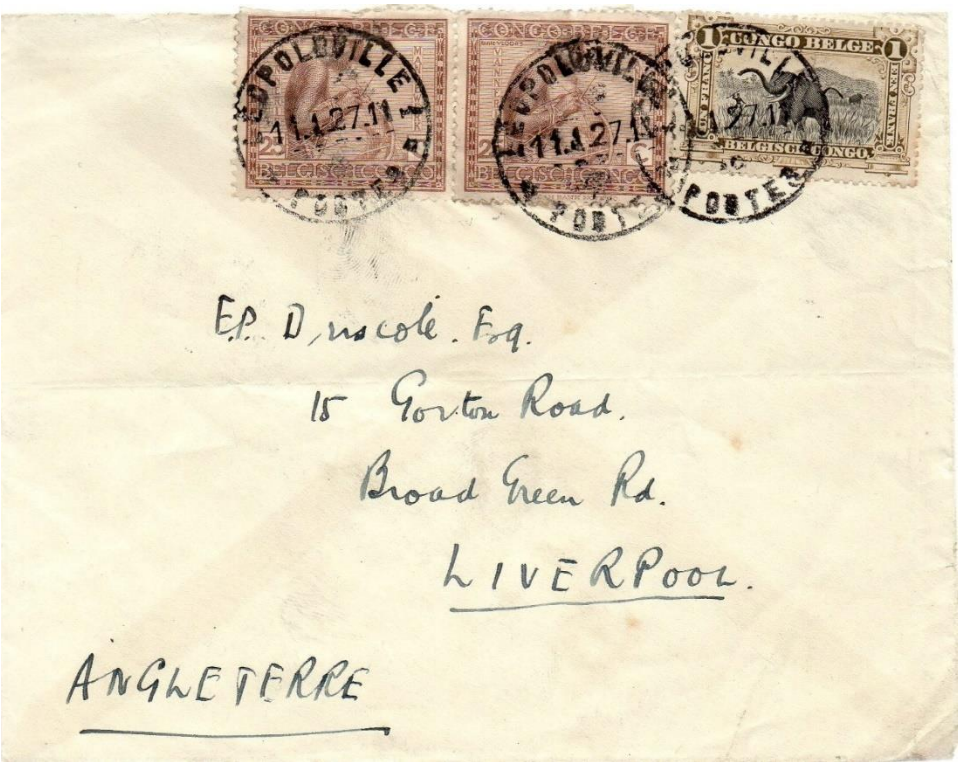
Postal stationery Mols issue (1922) + 1921 surcharged issue



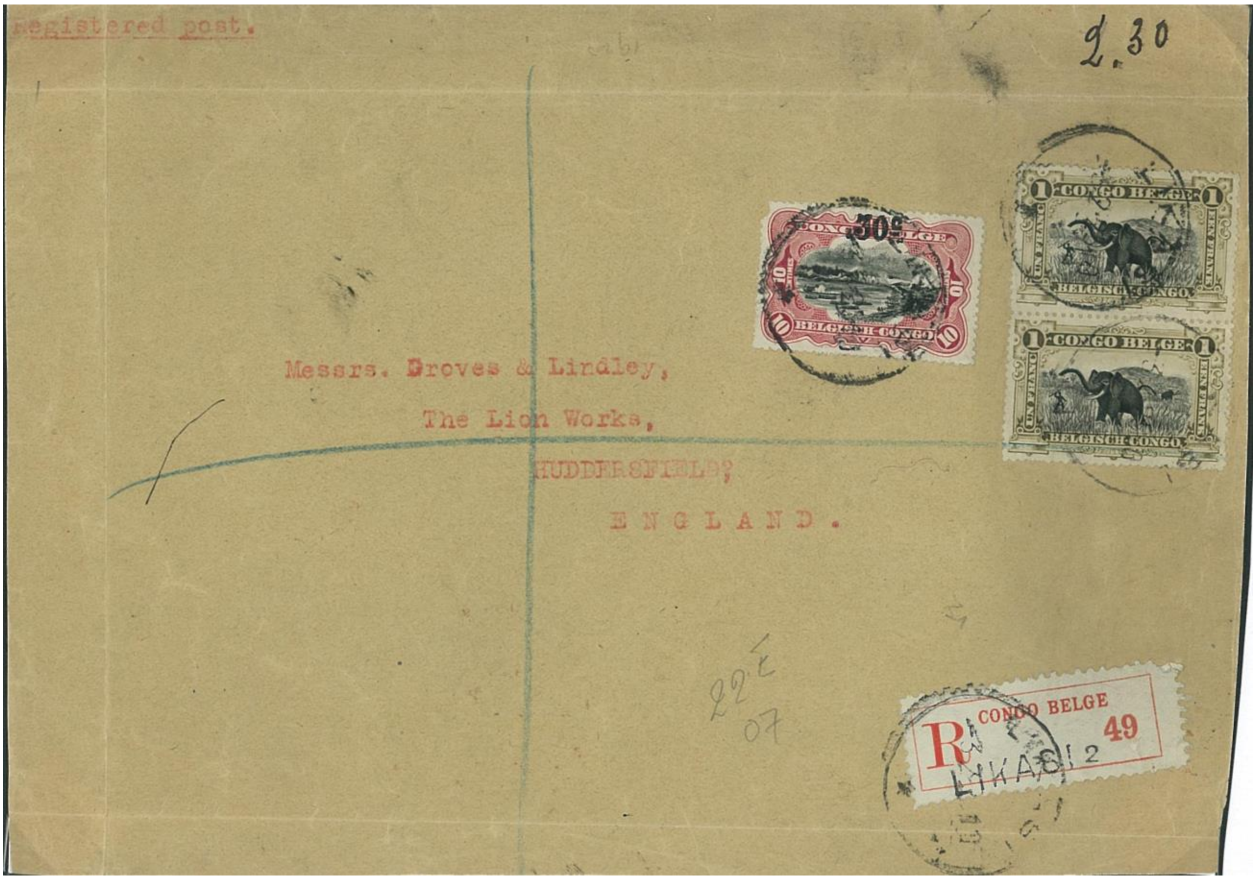
Postal stationery (view 102) sent from Kinshasa on August 19th, 1922 to Liverpool / UK.
International postage rate (March 1st, 1921) = 30c for postcard – postal stationery with picture at 15c (Stibbe nr 61) + 15c/50c – 1921 overprinted issue.

Mols Bilingual 1915 issue + Vloors issue (1923)

Cover sent from Leopoldville on January 11th, 1927 to Liverpool / UK
International postage rate (from January 1st, 1927 to April 30th 1927 – only 4 months) : letter (1.50 Fr / 20gr)
Franking by 1 Fr olive Mols Bilingual 1915 issue + a horizontal pair of 25c red-brown Vloors issue (1923)
Cancellation on type 7 (with POSTES) according to Heim & Keach Classification (Belgian Congo Study Circle) – this type of cancel is not common on Mols issue.
Very nice mixed franking – the Mols Bilingual 1915 stamps could be used up to the end of 1932 – a very long period.



Bilingual 1915 issue + Malines issue – surcharged (1922)



Registered letter (front) sent from Likasi on February 3rd, 1925 to Huddersfield / UK.
International postage rate from 1 May 1924 to 30 September 1925:
First 20 gr = 75c, Next 20 gr = 40c, Registration = 75c
Here for a letter of 41-60 gr (75c + 2x 40c) + registration (75c) = 2.30 Fr.
Franked by a vertical pair of 1 Fr olive Bilingual 1915 issue + 30c/10c Malines overprinted issue.

Vloors issue (1926) + surcharged Leys issue (1931)

Registered bank cover sent from Jadotville (Katanga district) on December 2nd, 1932 to Huddersfield / UK transit by Elisabethville (Dec. 4th - Capetown route by railways and then by ship to Europe).

International postage rate (from 01.01.31) : letter (2 Fr / 20gr) + registration (2 Fr).

Franked by an horizontal pair of 1.50 Fr blue – Vloors issue (1926) + a vertical pair of 50c/45c violet surcharged Leys issue (1931) – those overprinted stamps are uncommon on cover.



Stanley issue (1928)



Cover sent from Matadi on February 6th, 1932 to Beaconsfield / Buckinghamshire / UK.
International postage rate (from January 1st, 1930): letter (2 Fr).
Franked by 5c grey-green + 20c vermillon + 1.75 Fr blue – Stanley issue.



Airmail cover sent from Coquilhatville on November 24th, 1931 to Langley / Birmingham / UK.
International postage rate (from January 1st, 1930): letter (2 Fr).
Franked by 2 Fr brown – Stanley issue.
Airmail domestic rate: 1.50 Fr / 20 gr (1935 – 1940).
Franked by 50c + 1Fr – Airmail Stamps of 1921 issue. + framed AVION mark applied at departure.

Native, animals and landscapes issue (1931)



Cover sent from Aba (North East of Belgian Congo, border with Sudan) on January 2nd , 1941 to London / UK with transit Cairo / Egypt on January 29th ,where it was censored.
International postage rate (from September 1st, 1940) : letter (2.75 Fr / 20gr).
Franked by 25c + 50c + 1 Fr (pair) - Natives, animals and landscapes issue (1931 – in use up to 1942).

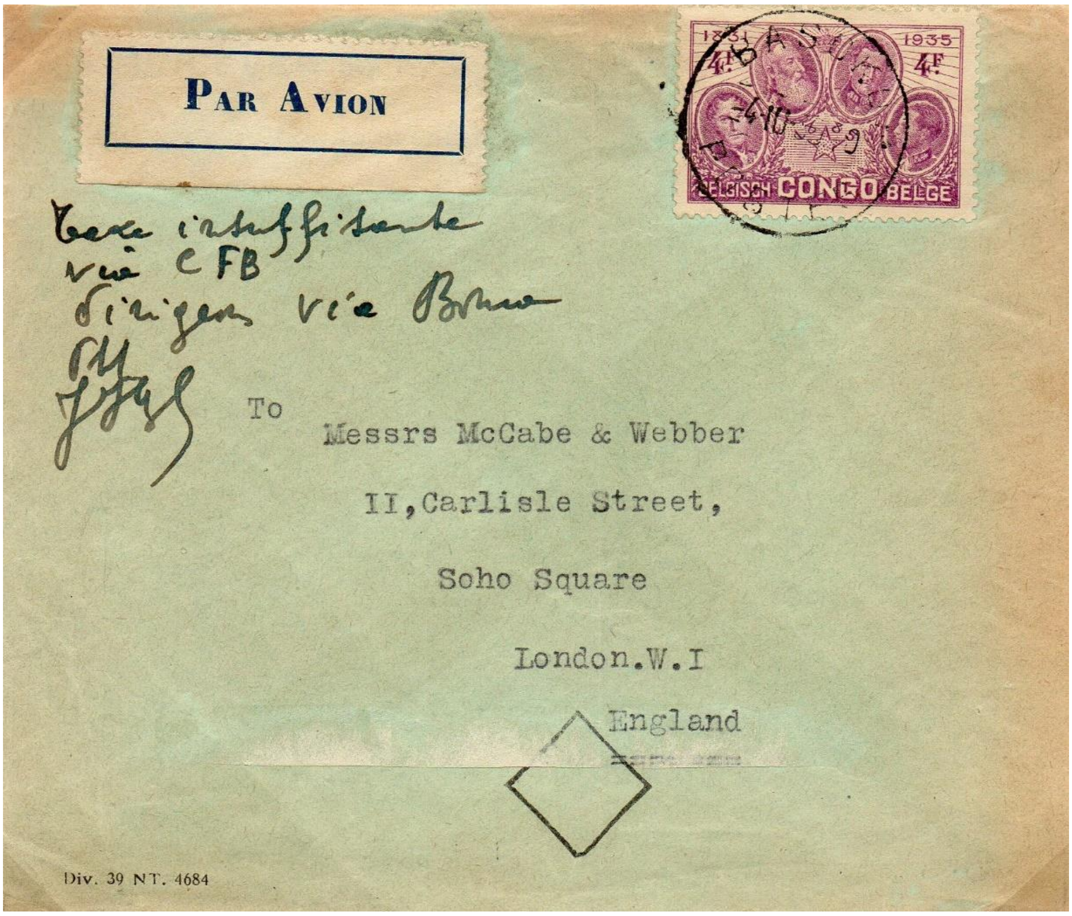
50 years of Congo Free State – 4 Belgian Kings issue (1935)



Registered cover sent from Jadotville on March 12th, 1936 to Manchester with transit Elisabethville on the next day – Capetown route
International postage rate (from Feb. 1st, 1934): letter (2.50 Fr / 20gr) + registration (2.50 Fr)



Franked by 1.25 Fr – 4x as a horizontal pair with bottom selvedges on front and 2 stamps on reverse of 50 years of Congo Free State issue – nice and scarce use of this uncommon stamp.



Airmail cover sent from Basoko on October 4th, 1935 to London/UK.

At that time, the Northern Congo's mail for Europe passed through Coquilhatville for the two AIR AFRICA and SABENA airlines. It was there that the mails were loaded either on board an AIR AFRICA plane or aboard a SABENA plane coming either from Brazzaville or Leopoldville.

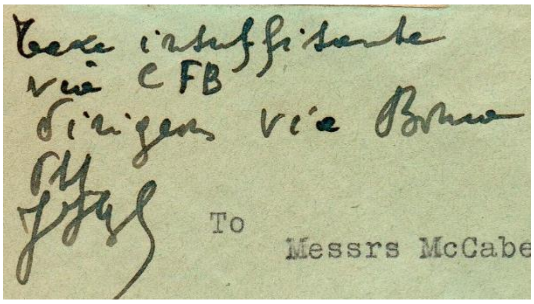
International postage rate (from Feb. 1st, 1934): letter (2.50 Fr / 20gr) + aimail surcharge (3.50 Fr / 5fr).

Insufficiently franked by a 4 Fr – 50 years of Congo Free State issue.

Postage sufficient to continue by air to Boma (1.00 Fr / 5 gr - SABENA in domestic service) The postman wrote in French « Taxe insuffisante via CFB / dirigeons via Boma » (English translation = "insufficient fee via CFB /direct via Boma "to take the boat to Boma.

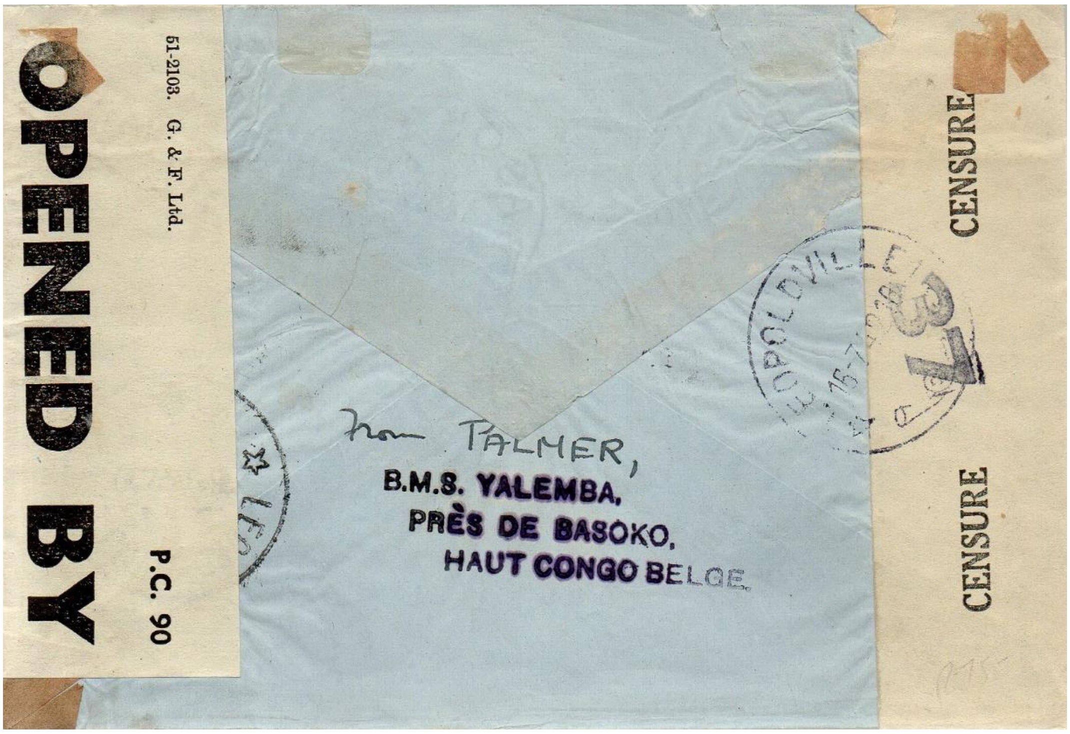
"CFB" means "Congo France Belgium" – airmail route at this time.
The diamond mark is an accounting mark applied by the London sorting office.

The Post Office occasionally carried out a census on the number of letters passing through the Sorting Office per day.



King Albert 1st Monument at Leopoldville issue + Surcharged National parks issue (1941)





Cover sent from Basoko on June 30th, 1942 to Huddersfield / UK – Baptist Missionary Society mail from Yalemba (near Basoko – Upper Belgian Congo).

International postage rate (from Jan. 1st, 1942): letter (3.50 Fr / 20gr) + Domestic airmail rate is free since Dec 1st, 1940 - International airmail picture has been cancelled by a pencil's cross.
Insufficiently franked at 3 Fr by a 50c King Albert 1st Monument issue and a 2.50 Fr / 2.40 Fr overprinted National Parks issue – no tax – no postage dues.

Belgian Congo censor tape applied at Leopoldville 1 on July 16th by censor number 37
British label OPENED BY EXAMINER 7843 / PC90 – applied in London.

Mask issue (1947) + 400 years of St Francois Xavier issue (1952)

Cover with Greek business header sent by airmail from Elisabethville on May 11th, 1953 to London EC2.
International postage rate (from July 1st, 1949): letter (4 Fr / 20gr) + airmail surcharge to Europe (4 Fr / 5gr).
Franked by 6.50 Fr Mask issue + 1.50 Fr St Francois issue.



Flowers issue (1952) + 25 years of Royal Colonial Institute issue (1954) + Royal Journey in Congo of King Baudouin 1st issue (1955)



Cover sent by airmail from Leopoldville 1A on May 21th, 1955 to Esher / Surrey / UK.

International postage rate (from July 1st, 1953): letter (4.50 Fr / 20gr) + airmail surcharge to Europe (3 fr / 5gr).

Franked by 1 Fr Flowers issue + 6.50 Fr Royal Colonial Institute issue + 1.50 Fr (2x) Royal Journey with French predominance for a letter of 6 -10 gr.

Flowers issue (1952) + Red cross issue (1957)



Business cover sent by airmail from Leopoldville on March 10th, 1958 to London EC4 / UK.
International postage rate (from 01.01.58): letter (5 Fr / 20gr + 3 Fr / 20gr suppl.) + airmail surcharge to Europe (3 Fr / 5 gr).
Franked with 8 Fr (vertical pair) & 100 Fr (with top selvedge and marginal inscription of Courvoisier Printers – a very scarce stamp on cover) of Flowers issue + the set of Red Cross 1958 issue.

50 years of Belgian Congo – 5 Belgian Kings issue (1958)

Cover sent from Matadi 1C on November 17th, 1958 to London W.I. / UK.

International printed matter rate (from 01.01.58: 1 Fr / 50gr

With Christmas card by surface mail (ship), sent thus long time before Christmas.

Franked: 1 Fr violet – 5 Belgian Kings issue.



Covers from UK to Belgian Congo (1886-1960)



Cover sent at 1/2d printed matter rate from Aberystwyth in Wales to the Congo.
Stamp cancelled with Aberystwyth duplex, code E. Posted on 30 March 1896. Transported to London by train. Cover travelled by train to Lisbon, arriving on 4 April. There is a Lisbon transit mark on reverse. Carried by ship from Lisbon, departing on 6 April. Ship arrived at Banana on 26 April. There is a Banana transit datestamp on reverse for 30 April. Forwarded via Boma to Leopoldville. There is a Leopoldville arrival datestamp on reverse for 13 May 1896.

Postcard sent at 1d rate from Highbury London to Belgian Congo on 4 April 1908. Routed to Lisbon via train and boat. Initially from London to Dover by train.

Then Calais to Paris by train and onwards to Lisbon by train, arriving on 7 April. Then travelled by boat to Boma arriving on 2 May 1908.





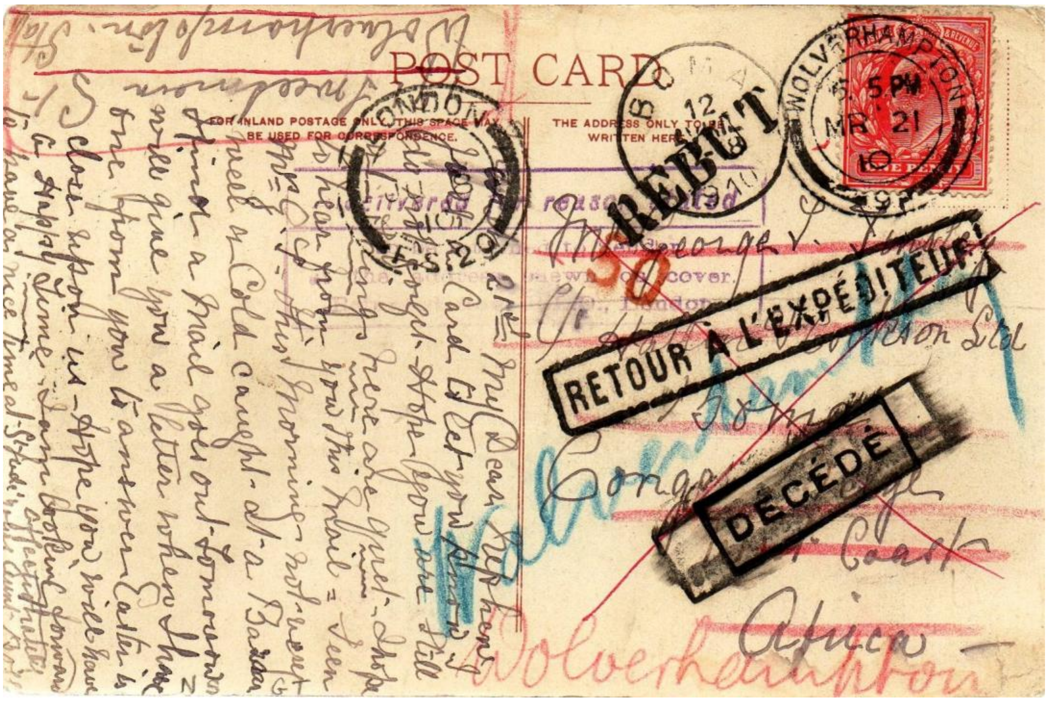
This is an amazing illustrated cover advertising foreign removals. Cover was posted in London on 22 June 1908. It was addressed to a person at a Church Mission in the Musaya district of Cairo. Arrived in Alexandria on the Mediterranean coast on 29 June. Then carried on the Cairo TPO (Travelling Post Office) to Cairo where it arrived on 30 June. Unfortunately, the addressee had moved. The cover was then re-directed to Nyasaland. It was then re-directed again to Northern Rhodesia (now Zambia) and Congo.



The reverse of this cover has 18 different datestamps so that the probable routes of the first and second re-directions can be followed. After Cairo, the cover was taken to Port Said (datestamp for 30 June). It then travelled to Suez (1st July). The cover reached Mombasa, situated on the Kenyan coast, on 23 July. It was forwarded to the Chinde B.P.O. in Nyasaland (British Central Africa) (now Malawi) where it arrived on 19 August. There is a superb squared circle datestamp of CHINDE B.P.O. on the reverse.

From here, the cover was re-directed again – travelling to Beira on the Mozambique coast. There is a hexagonal datestamp in purple for 25 August. The cover was then transported along the coast to Chinde again in Mozambique. It was then forwarded to Chiromo in Nyasaland (British Central Africa) (5 September). It arrived in Blantyre, Nyasaland on 10 September. The cover was then forwarded to Fort Jameson in Northern Rhodesia (now Zambia).

The re-direction was then endorsed ‘Congo Free State via Katanga’. The cover then travelled via Elisabethville to Kambove in the Congo. However, no datestamps were applied in the Congo. Finally the cover is endorsed ‘Not known in Kambove’.



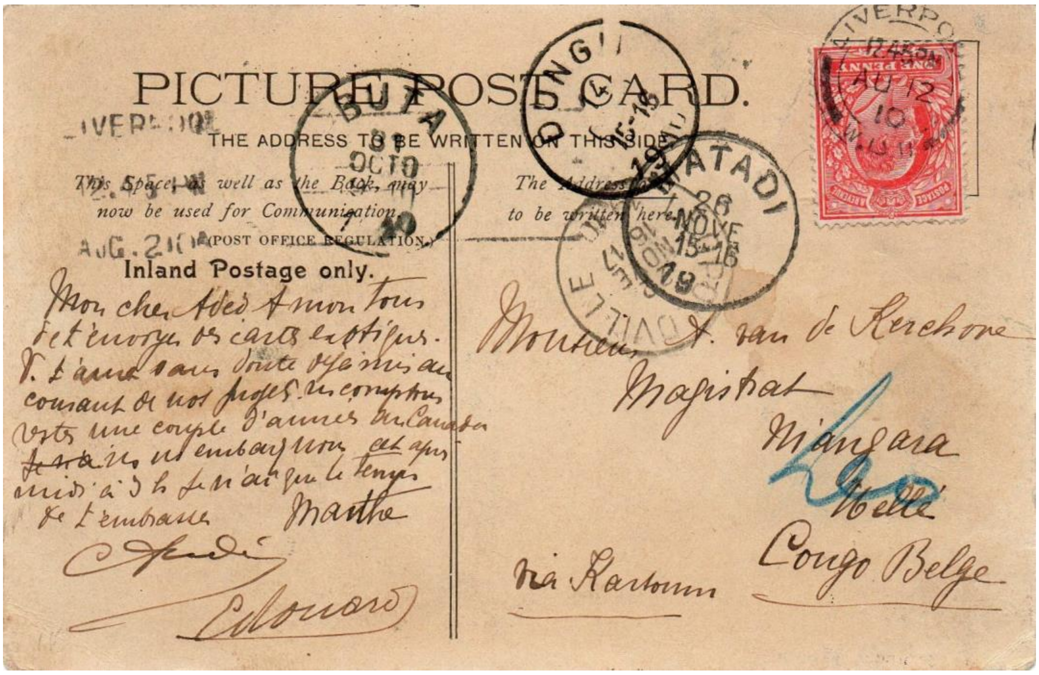
Postcard from Wolverhampton in the Midlands posted on 21 March 1910 to Boma, Belgian Congo. The Boma datestamp is applied alongside on arrival on 12 April. Unfortunately, the addressee had died. The Post Office applied a “DÉCÉDÉ” framed handstamp (Deceased). A “RETOUR A L’EXPEDITEUR” handstamp was also applied at Boma.

The Congo address was deleted and Wolverhampton was inserted in manuscript. The postcard was returned to the Foreign section of the Post Office in London where a LONDON F.S. double circle datestamp was applied. Then forwarded to the Returned Letter Office in London where a framed 4 line instructional mark was applied –in violet – ‘Undelivered for reason stated / to be returned to sender / at the address shewn on the cover/ R.L.O., London’. The card would have then been returned to Wolverhampton by train via Birmingham.

The card also has a “REBUT” cachet applied which means SCRAP.

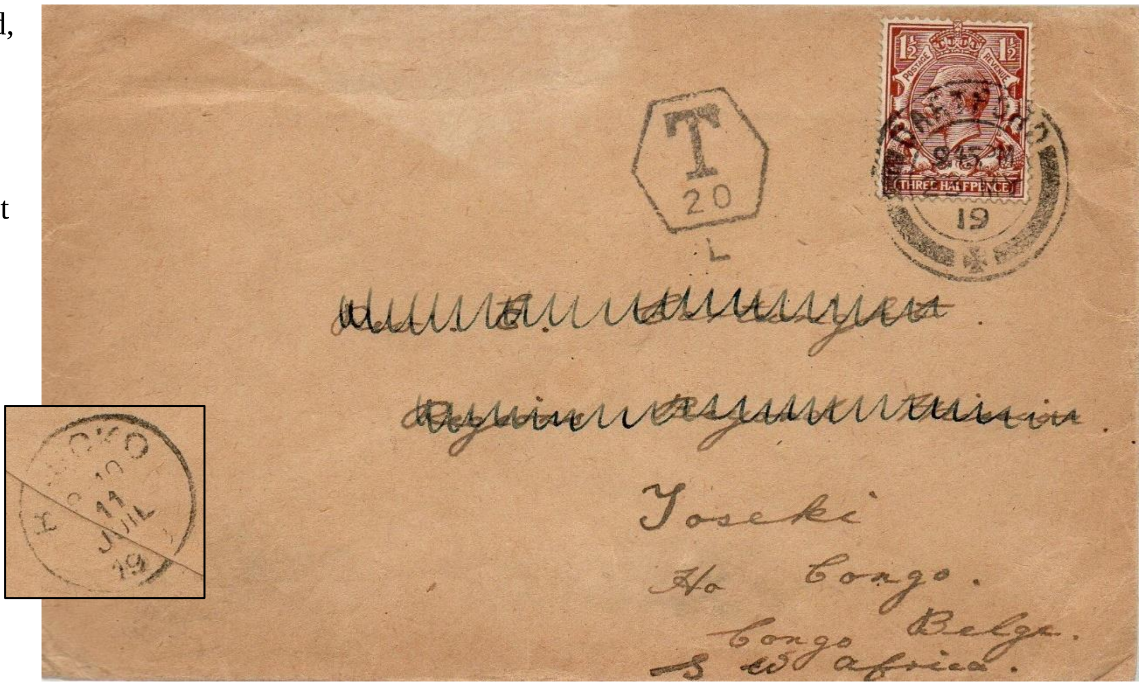
Colour picture postcard sent from Liverpool on 12 August 1910 to Niangara / Uele District / Belgian Congo with sender requested route “Via Khartoum” (Sudan – blue & white Nile route).

Transit by Dungu / Congo on 14 October and Buta on 31 October – no arrival datestamp because the post office of Niangara will open only on 15 June 1912.



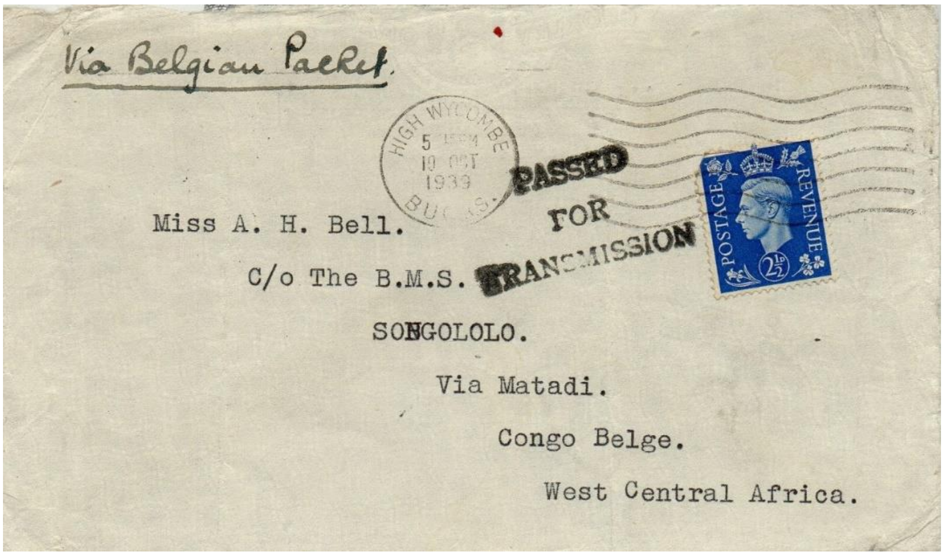
Then the card was re-directed firstly to “Leo” (blue pencil) where it arrived on 22 November and finally to Boma (26 November).

The card has crossed the African continent with more than 3,600 miles covered !!!!



Cover from Dartford, Kent to Belgium Congo posted on 23rd May 1919. 1 1/2d postage paid. However, the correct rate to Belgium Congo was 2 1/2d. So the cover was underpaid by 1d. This was equivalent to a 10ct postal deficiency.

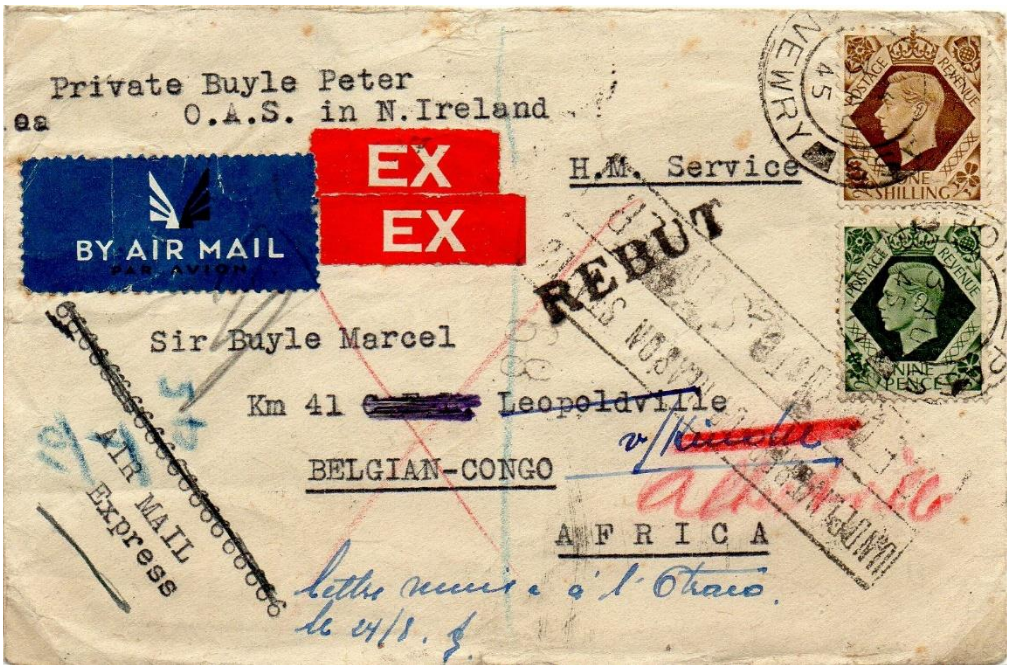
Cover sent to the main Post office in London where the hexagonal 'T 20/ L' handstamp was applied. The 'L' at the base signified London. The surcharge would be double the deficiency – hence the '20'.
The cover has a Belgian Congo arrival datestamp for 11 July 1919 on the reverse. Transit time was over 6 weeks. No surcharge was applied to this cover when it arrived in Belgian Congo.



Cover sent from the Baptist Missionary Society addressed to "Via Matadi, Congo Belge". Posted on 19 October 1939 at the correct overseas surface letter rate ~ 2 1/2d. (Rate was increased to 3d in May 1940). Stamp cancelled with a High Wycombe machine cancel. Postal censorship was introduced in England on 1 September 1939. Cover passed unopened by the censor who applied a cachet – 'PASSED FOR TRANSMISSION'. The cover is endorsed in manuscript – 'Via Belgian Packet'.



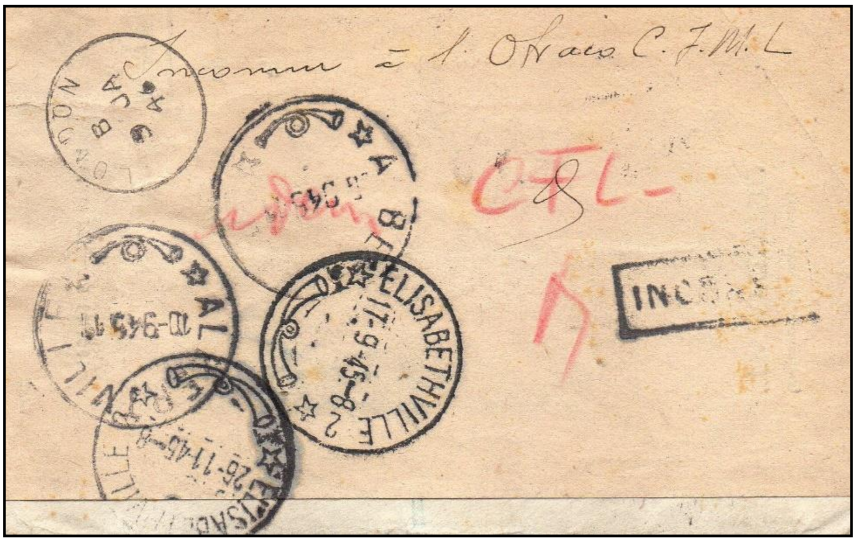
However, it appears that someone in the London sorting office believed Songololo was a town in Thailand. Hence the cover was transported by ship to Thailand arriving on 25 November 1939 . An arrival datestamp was applied to the reverse. The cover was 5 weeks in transit. It was then re-directed to Belgian Congo. This again would have been by ship and rail. It eventually arrived in Leopoldville on 2 February 1940. The Leopoldville arrival datestamp was applied to the reverse of the cover.





Airmail cover sent by expres from Poyntzpass / Northern Ireland (On Active Service) on 13 August 1945 to Km 41 CFL – Léopoldville (CFL = Chemin de Fer des grands Lacs = Large Lake Railways) where it arrived on 24 August.

Handwritten note "Letter delivered to Otraco on 24/8", "see Kindu", "Albertville", "unknown at Otraco CFML", (which added a label at the back of the envelope) "idem CFL »



Left Leopoldville on August 29th, to Albertville, where it arrived on September 10th, and then at Elisabethville on September 17th.



Congolese linear marks "UNKNOWN" & " "REBUT ".

It left Elisabethville on 26 September, returned to the sender via London on 9 January 1946.
British framed mark: «UNDELIVERED NOR REASON STATED RETURN TO SENDER".





This Polish Resettlement Camp was set up in 1946 on the site of an old Army Camp. The cover was sent from a Polish Refugee in the Camp near Nantwich, Cheshire.

Cover shows the correct 1/- airmail letter rate to Belgian Congo. The stamps were cancelled unusually with the Nantwich circular packet handstamps which did not show the date of departure. Cover would have travelled by train to London and then flown to Belgian Congo.

Cover received a Leopoldville arrival datestamp on reverse for 22 June 1947. However, the addressee had moved to Brussels. The cover was endorsed in manuscript with a new address in Brussels.
The cover was flown from Leopoldville on 24 June to its new destination.





Registered cover sent from Lombard street, London to Goma in Belgian Congo. Cover posted at 1/ 9d registered airmail letter rate. Stamps cancelled with oval LOMBARD STREET B.O. (Branch Office) registered datestamps for 25 May 1955. With LONDON E.C.2 registration label.

The cover was flown to Leopoldville arriving there on 27 May. The Leopoldville transit datestamp is on the reverse. Then by surface route to Goma. The arrival datestamp for 30 May is applied on the reverse.

Mails to Belgian Congo with UK transit

We can find in several periods, mails to Belgian Congo with a transit by UK, mainly due to the maritime line having a stopover in a British harbour.

First a precursor mail of the Congo to a member of the International Association of Congo.

Cover addressee: Lieutenant of the Merchant Fleet Edouard MANDUAU.

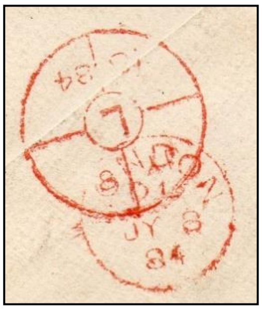
Marine Lieutenant was hired by the International Association of Congo. He left for the Congo on 1 April 1884. Arrived at Boma, he was placed at the disposal of Captain Hanssens and took the road to Vivi. He left Vivi for Leopoldville where Hanssens sent him, and was attached to a mission to explore the Gordon Bennett or Djue River. On returning to Leo, he was in charge of assembling the boats on the left bank of the Pool.

In the newspaper *Le Mouvement Géographique* of 27 July 1884, it was noted how to send letters to the Congo; the address must be written as (in French):

Via Liverpool
M. Delcommune ou à son ordre
BANANA-POINT
Congo River S.W. Coast of Africa
Pour remettre à M ....

(English translation: Via Liverpool, Mr Decommune of at his order, BANANA POINT, Congo River S.W. Coast of Africa, to deliver to Mr ……..

Cover sent from Brussels on 7 July 1884 via Liverpool to Banana Point to the attention of Mr Delcommune to be delivered to M. Manduau. Transit London on July 8th, 1884 and "L" (Liverpool) on the same day. The letter traveled with the ship *S. Volta* leaving Liverpool on July 16th, 1884.



Belgian international postage rate (out of UPU) = 75c / 15gms
Franked by 25c.& 50c – King Leopold II – 1869 issue



Postal stationery departed from Boston 20 April 1895 to a preacher at Kinjila / Congo / West Africa. By boat to Southampton and train to London. London transit datestamp in red for 1 May. Then by boat to Banana arriving 31 May.





Registered cover sent from Mexico Certificado datestamp (Registered) on reverse for 14 August 1922 to Elisabethville with New York transit datestamp for 20 August, then by ship to Southampton and onward to London by train on reverse for 30 August. Then by sea probably via Lisbon to Boma or to Capetown to go to Elisabethville by train with Rhodesian transit.





Belgian postal stationery (double) sent from Antwerp on 24 July 1893 to Mr Witteveen / Railways at Matadi with transit by Liverpool (sender request) on 25 July to take the British ship *S.S. Nubia* (owned by the Elder Dempster & Co) to the West Coast of Africa.

Transit by Banana & Boma on 8 September and Matadi arrival on 10 September.

Belgian international postage rate (from July 1st, 1892) = 10c.

Postal stationery of King Leopold II – 1887 issue (Stibbe nr 22 type I).

Mails from UK to Africa with a transit by Belgian Congo

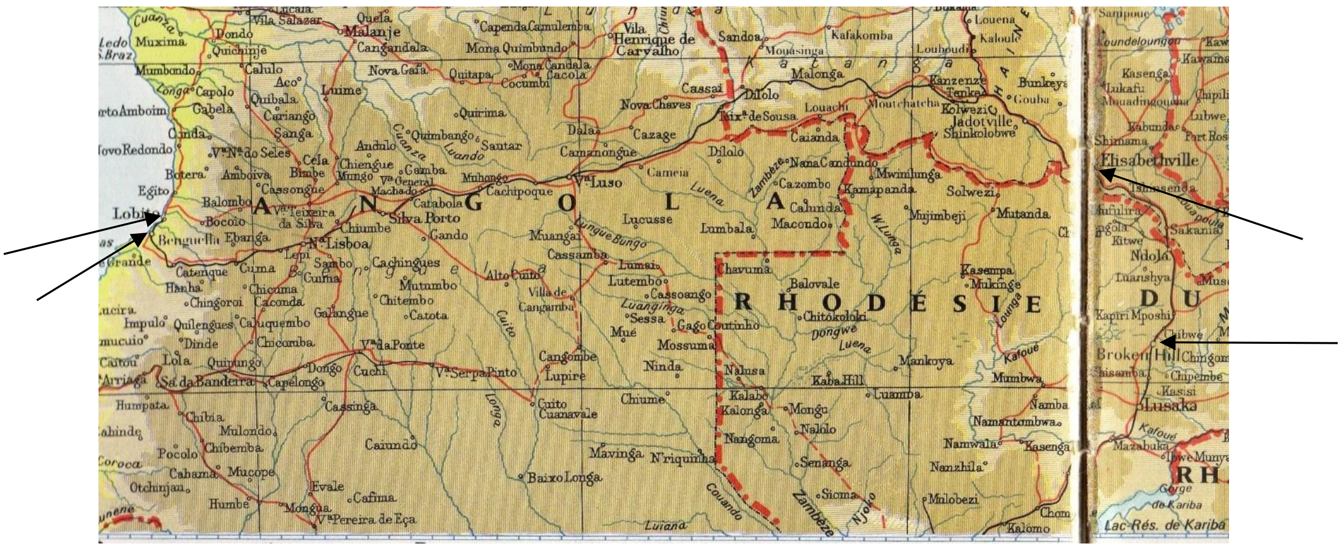
Airmail cover sent from Wilton Road - Hudson's Place SW1 / London on 8 May 1936 to the Post Office of Lobito / Angola where it arrived on 25 May.



The cover was sent by Imperial Airways line from London to Capetown with stop at Broken Hill / Northern Rhodesia on 17 May. Then transfered to Elisabethville by plane of the Aeroclub of Katanga where it arrived on 18 May. After that by train from Elisabethville to Lobito.

The cover was forwarded to the addressee at Benguela / Angola where it arrived finally on 26 May.
8d per ½ oz. airmail rate was used but it was the airmail rate from UK to Leopoldville; the correct airmail rate to Elisabethville via Rhodesia was 1/ 3d per ½ oz. at this time. No surcharge was applied for the deficiency.









Airmail cover sent from London F.S. / UK on 29 December 1941 to a "Maréchal des Logis" (Sergeant) at the Headquarter of Brazzaville / French Congo with transit by Stanleyville on 26 February 1942 and Leopoldville on 2 March 1942 and then to Brazzaville (in front of Leopoldville on Congo River) on the next day.

After that the cover was forwarded to its final destination at Fort Lamy / Tchad.

Censor label "OPENED BY EXAMINER 1259 – PC90" applied at departure.
Violet censor cancel « CONTROLE POSTAL – AFRIQUE EQUATORIALE FRANCAISE – Commission A » applied at Brazzaville.

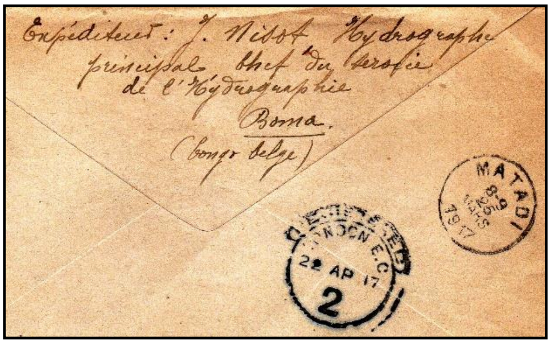
1/ 3d per ½ oz. airmail rate via France (1937-1939) was applied but at this time, during WW2, this line was stopped. The cover has most probably travelled to Africa by boat. Transit time was over 8 weeks.

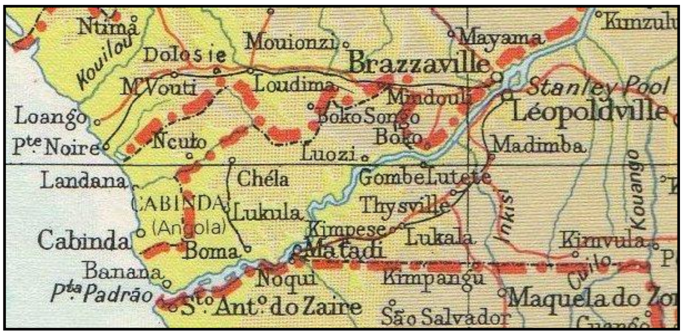
Mails to UK with a transit by Belgian Congo

Due to communication facilities of the Congo Free State and after the Belgian Congo, we can find mails which have transited the Belgian colony during their travels to their final destinations.

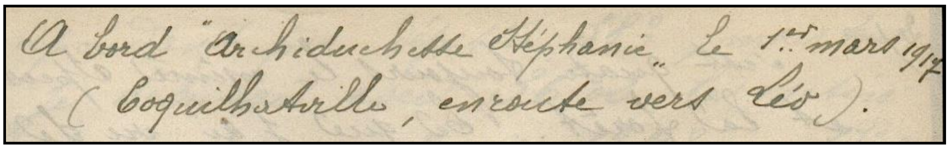
Those facilities are harbour of Matadi, railways from Matadi to Leopoldville (1898), railways from Elisabethville to Capetown with Brokenhill connection (1910), railways from Elisabethville to Bengwela (Angola), several air connections, a long runway at Leopoldville airport (extended by US Army during WW2), clipper connection with USA (end of 1941) and several easy connections (by train or plane) to Imperial Airways airline stops such as Juba (Sudan), Dodoma (British East Africa), Broken Hill (Rhodesia), Kampala (Uganda).

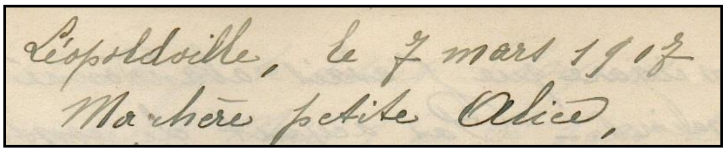


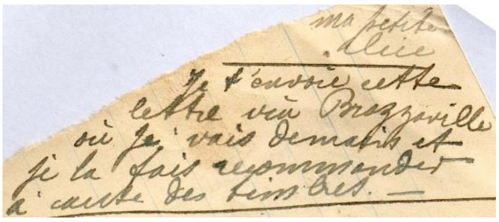




Sender: Jules Nissot – Belgian hydrographer – son-in-law of General Consul of Belgium at Liverpool (during WW1).


A bord "Archiduchesse Stéphanie" le 1er mars 1917
(Coquilhatville, en route vers Léo).


Léopoldville, le 7 mars 1917
Ma chère petite Alice,

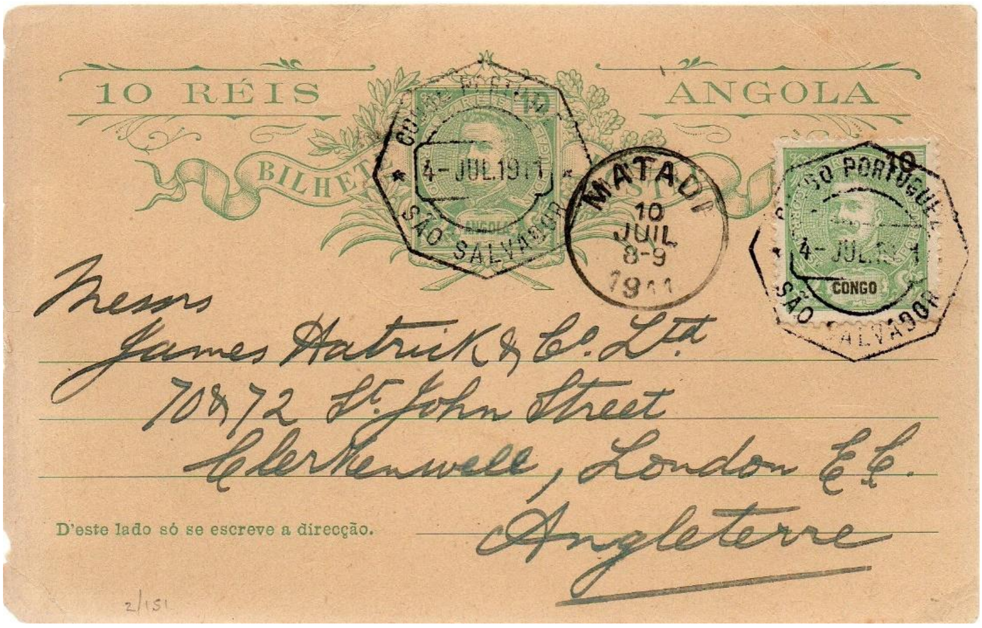

ma petite Alice
Je t'envoie cette lettre via Brazzaville où je vais demain et je la fais recommander à cause des timbres. –

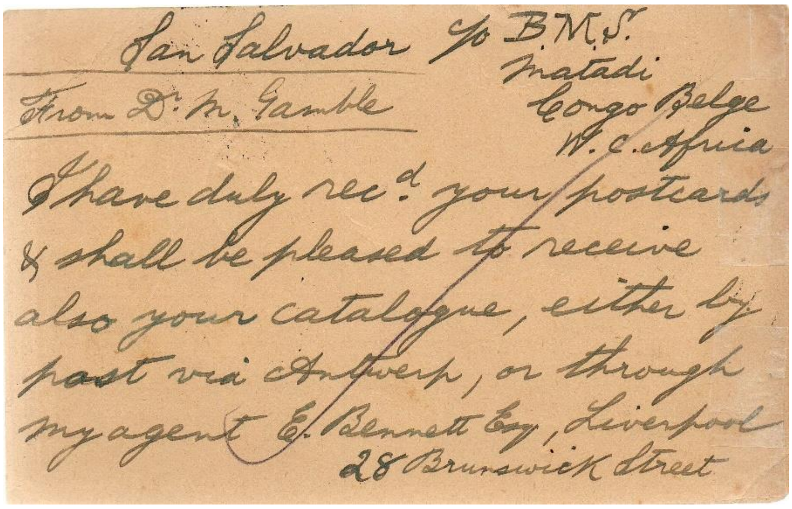
Envelope with 2 letters – fisrt written aboard of *Archiduchesse Stephanie* (River steamer – near Coquilhatville, en route to Leopoldville) on March 1st, 1907 and the second at Leopoldville on March 7th and posted to Brazzaville / French Congo on March 9th to Liverpool via Matadi on March 25th. Return by Belgian ship *Albertville (4)* left Matadi on 1 April to Antwerp. Registered arrival cancel at London on April 22th.

French Congo postage rate of January 1st, 1917: the 2nd step of rate at 40c + registration of 25c = 65c.

Franking by 15c (thin paper – perf 11.5) & 30c (thick paper – perf 11) Chassepot issue
+ 1c, 2c (2x), 5c & 10c Panther - Issue of 1907.

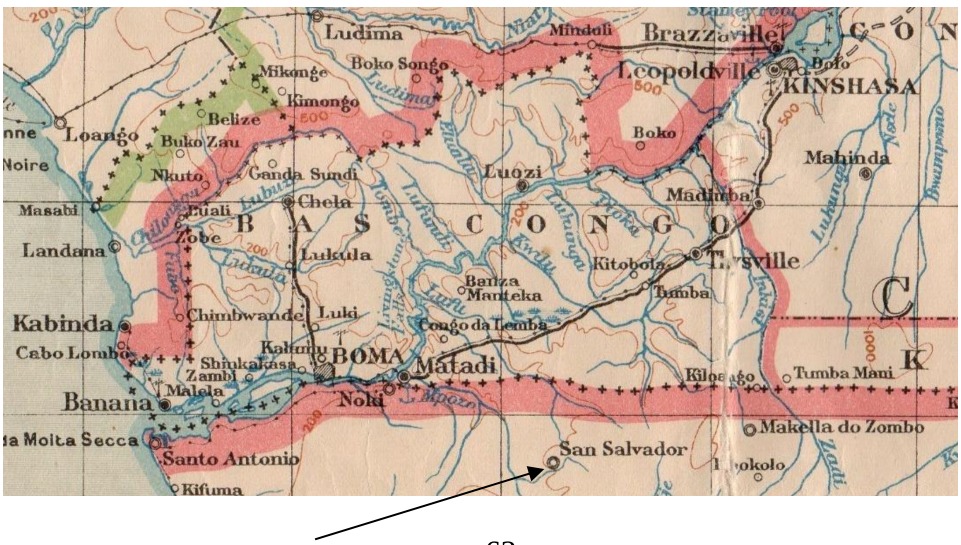
The sender has wrote in French:"je t'envoie cette lettre via Brazzaville où je vais demain et je la fait recommander à cause des timbres" (English transaltion = I send this letter via Brazzaville where I will go tomorrow and I will ask registration for the stamps).



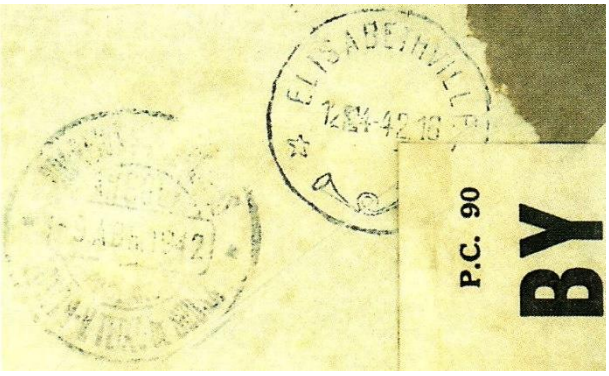


Angolan Postal Stationery sent from San Salvador / Portuguese Congo on July 4th, 1911 to London / UK with transit by Matadi on July 10th – carried by Belgian Ship *Elisabethville (1)* which left Matadi on July 12th to Antwerp (arrival on August 2nd 1911).

Sender = Dr Gamble – c/o B.M.S. (Baptist Misionary Society) / Matadi.



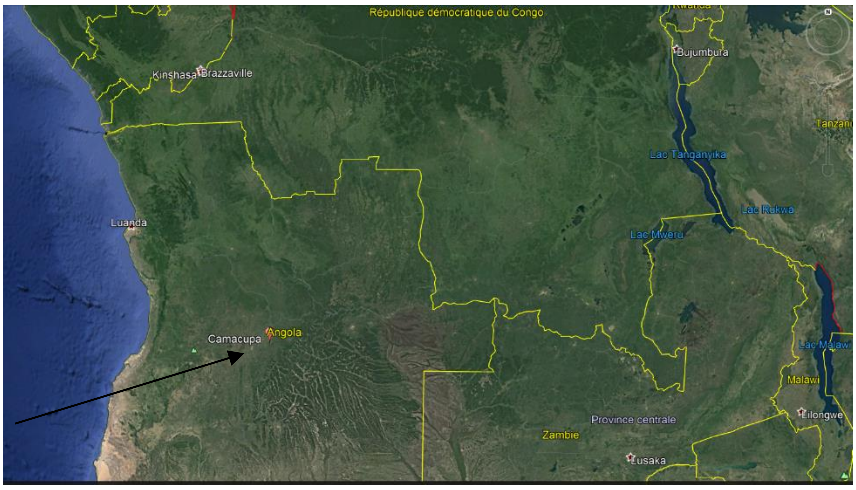




Cover sent from Camapuca / Angola on 9 April 1942 to Preston / UK with transit by Villa Texeira de Sousa the same day and Elisabethville on 12 April.

Sender note: "via Elisabethville – Capetown"
The cover has thus taken the train from Elisabethville to Capetown with Broken Hill connection (in use since 1910) and then a weekly British ship to UK.
Censor label OPENED BY EXAMINER 4327 - PC90 applied at arrival.

Camapuca is located on the Lobito – Benguela – Elisabethville Railways, in the middle of the line; Villa Texeira de Sousa is located on the same railway at the border between Angola & Belgian Congo.



Maritime mail

1. « Compagnie Maritime Belge » (Belgian Maritime Co) – History

For more details – see the webiste of our friend Charles Stockmans
http://congoposte.be/bateaux_courrier.htm

At the time of the formation of the Committee of Study of the Upper Congo in 1879, the southern part of the western coast of Africa was served by only two British lines, the British and African Steam Navigation Cy. and the African Steam Ship Cy. - who hac their home base in Liverpool. These two lines, after having for some time been in ruinous competition, were combined in such a way as to form, in reality, only one line. The departures took place every six weeks from Liverpool, but the boats touched Banana (Belgian Congo) very irregularly at the mouth of the Congo River; the journey lasted more than two months, due to the slowness of the ships and also because of the multiplicity of stops that spread all along Guinea, from Sierra Leone to Nigeria.

The goods were shipped from Antwerp to Liverpool to be transshipped on board the steamers for Congo. The goods were unloaded at Banana, whence the small steamers of the Committee of Studies transported them to Vivi or Matadi.

As the amount of freight increased gradually, the transporters' attention was drawn to the Congo. As early as 1883, the boats of the Portuguese line - the Emprezanacionale - began to touch Banana. About the same time Woermann Linie was created, which also sent its steamers to the Congo.

The Belgian State received from the “Compagnie gantoise de Navigation “(Ghent Navigation Company) the proposal to establish a Belgian transport line to the Congo by commissioning three steamers of about 1,650 tons: the *Brabo*, which goes back for the first time on the Congo River to Boma, the *Lys* and the *Flanders*. This courageous undertaking was not of long duration; in 1888, faced with fierce competition from foreign armaments, the Ghent Company renounced and withdrew its ships.

At the beginning of 1888 the Belgian State again treated with the old English lines. It guaranteed all its cargo from Antwerp to Congo, direct or via Liverpool with transshipment in that port, departures must take place from Antwerp whenever the goods to be loaded exceed a tonnage of 500 tons, from Liverpool when this quantity of freight could not be guaranteed. From this period the expeditions had sufficient importance for the departures of Antwerp to be more or less regular. The duration of the journey was fixed at 30 days for steamers departing from Antwerp.

In 1891, the Congo Free State and some commercial companies signed transport agreements with a trade union formed by the British and African Steam Navigation Cy. and the African Steam Ship Cy., both of Liverpool, and the Woermann Linie of Hamburg.

Many Belgians wanted our colonial transport to take place under the national flag. A few years later, we saw the creation of two companies under Belgian law: the Société Maritime du Congo (Maritime Society of the Congo), founded on 20 February 1895, a subsidiary of the Woermann Linie on the one hand and the Compagnie belge Maritime du Congo (Belgian Maritime Company of Congo), founded on January 24, 1895, subsidiary of the African Steam Ship Cy directed by Elder Dempster of Liverpool on the other hand. The two companies each bring ships. The Belgian Maritime Company of the Congo aligns the old *Coomassie* and the new *Leopoldville 1* while the Maritime Society of Congo aligns the *Eduard Bohlen* which will be replaced quickly by the *Brusselsville 1*. A monthly service under Belgian flag was organized and

Leopoldville 1, a steamer of 3,363 tons, was inaugurated on February 6, 1895, arriving in the Congo twenty days after leaving Antwerp. The *Eduard Bohlen* leaves on 6 March and the *Coomassie* on 6 April.

In view of the slow development of the equipment of the port of Matadi and the river ports, the Maritime Society of the Congo withdrew on 3 April 1901. The Belgian Maritime Company of the Congo remained alone, continuing the service with three ships and regular departures every three weeks. To increase the comfort of passengers and at the same time meet the needs of a constantly increasing traffic, these ships were promptly replaced by larger and more modern vessels. At the same time the duration of the journey was reduced to 19 days, the stopovers being La Pallice, Tenerife, Dakar, Conakry, Sierra Leone and Boma.

By agreement with the British armed forces, the Belgian Maritime Company of the Congo, which until then had been entirely Belgian only by name, passed entirely under Belgian control. The Walford Maritime Agency was established in Antwerp on 24 July 1902.

2. World War I

In 1914, the invasion of Belgium forced the Company to transport its organization to England, in the offices of Maritime Agency Walford, in London and in those of Elder Dempster Cy Ltd., in Hull. From 1915, the Company aligned its three ships on the Great Britain - Congo relationship initially from Liverpool. The ships then took Hull as a loading and unloading point. The embarkation of passengers and their disembarkation took place at Falmouth.

Throughout the war, the Company ensured relations as regular as possible with the Belgian Congo, which rendered the Allies the most valuable services. In addition to ordinary traffic, its ships carried a large part of the 700 officers and non-commissioned officers sent from Europe to Africa to reinforce the Public Force (Belgian Congo Army). During the three years of the campaign against the Germans in that part of the world, large supplies of hospital equipment, medicines, food for Europeans and natives, clothing, camping, equipment, ammunition, weapons and tools were transported. Copper, copal and oilseeds were brought back to Great-Britain. But the Belgian Maritime Company of the Congo paid a heavy price to the underwater war: its steamer *Elisabethville* was torpedoed on September 6, 1917, off Belle-Île (island of Brittany opposite Quiberon) by an enemy submarine.

3. Wolrd War II

During the invasion of Belgium by the Germans on 10 May 1940, the Company immediately ordered the ships in Antwerp to leave the port and to go to French ports. The French navy requisitioned *Albertville 5* and sent it to Le Havre, where it was sunk by the German air force. The *Baudouinville 1* remained in the port of Bordeaux. Afterwards this was transferred to Nantes where it was scuttled on 10 August 1944 by the routed Germans. The *Elisabethville 2* arrived at La Pallice on 14 May and left for Great Britain on 6 June. To this already high tribute must be added 294 sailors who perished, the *Leopoldville 5* was torpedoed on December 24, 1944 and in all, 23 of the 31 ships of the fleet were lost.

During the first four months of the war, the Great-Britain - Congo line was assured, notably by *Leopoldville 5* and that of Congo to the United States, where several commercial companies established their commercial headquarters, by *Elisabethville 2* and *Thysville*. On September 20, 1940, the whole fleet was requisitioned and the three steamers served as troopships.

At the liberation, the Company had seven ships, including two paqueboat, *Elisabethville 2* and *Thysville*. The problems of 1945 were identical to those of 1918. The colony lacked capital. Enormous quantities of goods must be transported to Belgium. Many colonialists wanted to return home as their replacements awaited their departure to the colony. In 1945, the Company made sixteen trips to the Congo.

4. Postal history



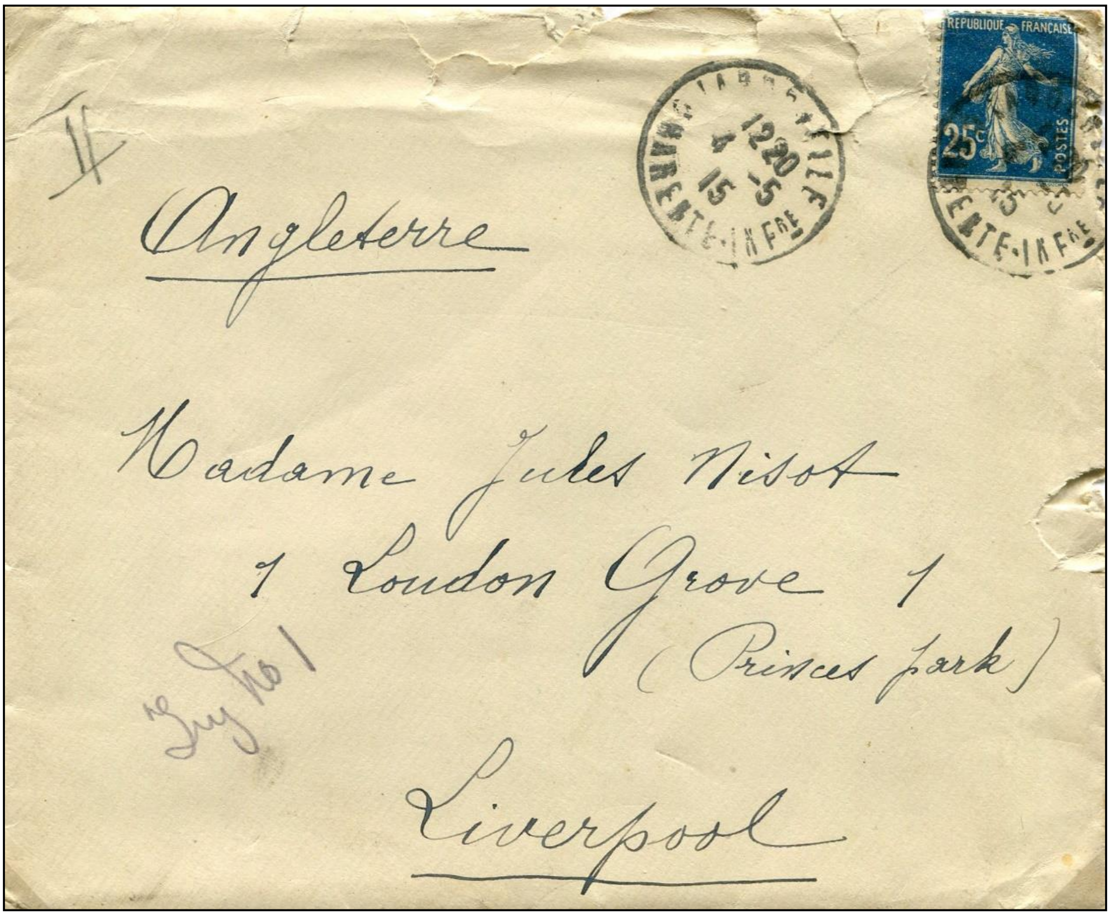
Cover posted at high sea on paquebot *Albertville (2)* – 1898/1904) and franked by Gold Coast stamp, sent to Walmer / Kent / UK where it arrived on December 29th, 1903.

The stamp is cancelled by Southampton Ship Letter on December 28th

Return journey of the *Albertville* – departure of Matadi (Dec 12th) – Arrival Anvers (Dec 29th)

Violet linear mark of the ship, applied on the cover (not on the stamp at this period) – “S.S. ALBERTVILLE”.

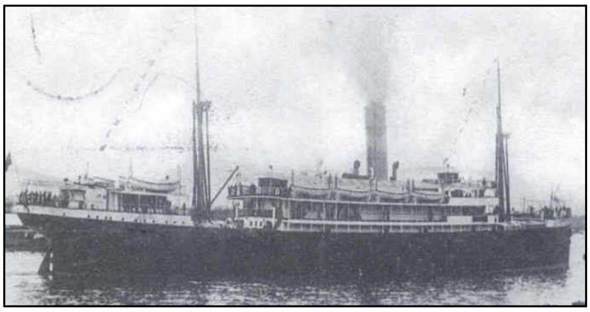
After the invasion of Belgium by the German armies, the “Compagnie maritime belge du Congo “(Belgian Maritime Company of the Congo) had to transport its organization and its ships to Great Britain. Beginning in 1915, the Belgian liners provided the link to the Congo from Liverpool first and then from Hull. The two letters and the telegram illustrated hereafter were despatched by a passenger of the steamer *Elisabethville 1* which left Liverpool on 1 May 1915 (second departure from Liverpool, the following from Hull) to Boma, where she arrived on 23 May 1915.



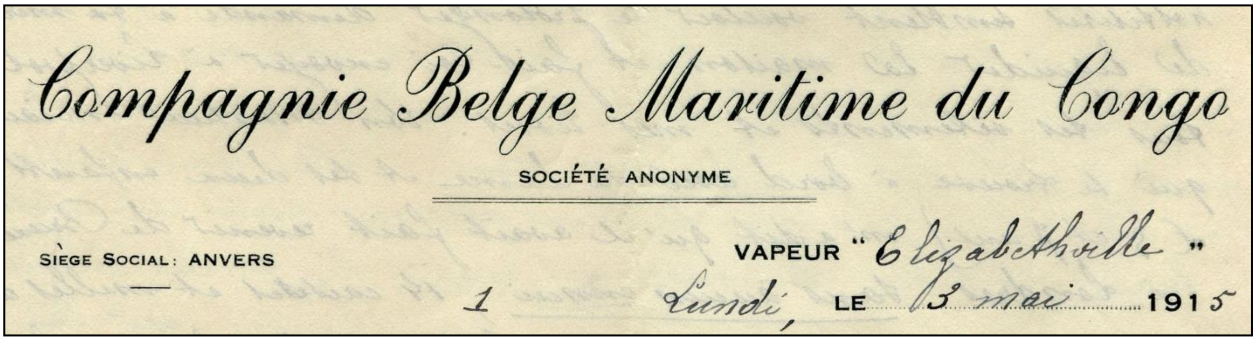
Cover written by Jules Nisot on 3 May 1915 on board of the *Elisabethville 1* to his wife Alice in Liverpool and posted at the first stop of the ship at La Rochelle on 4 May 1915.

Franked at 25 c. (Belgian postage rate for the letter in international service) by a French "Semeuse" stamp.

Jules Nisot, naval officer and hydrographer joined his office in the Congo, his wife and his baby remained in Great Britain ; they could join him 3 months later.



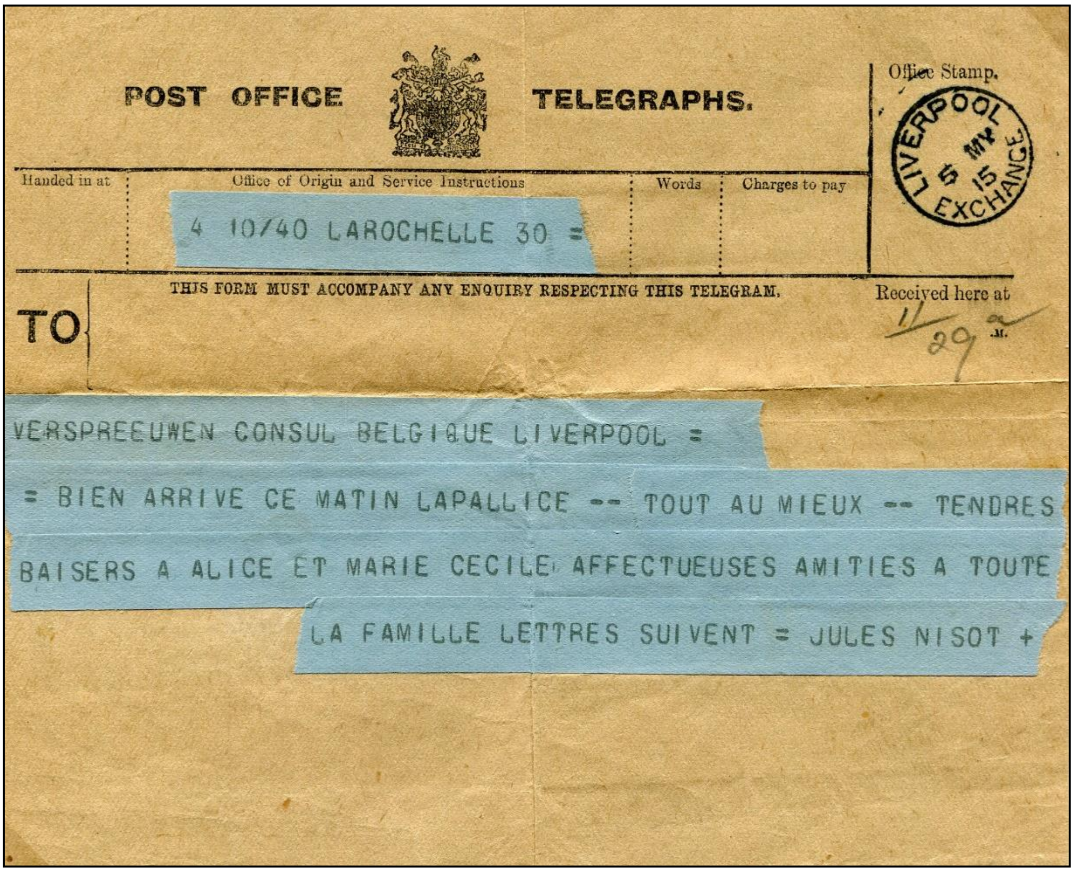
Steamer *Elisabethville 1* (1911-1917)



Compagnie Belge Maritime du Congo
SOCIÉTÉ ANONYME
SIÈGE SOCIAL: ANVERS
VAPEUR "Elizabethville"
1 Lundi, LE 3 mai 1915

Letter written on board on paper with header of the Maritime Company.

In his letter, Jules Nisot wrote (in French) : « … *nous formons le groupe des grosses nuques qui se trouvent à la table du capitaine…Madame Henry, la femme du Gouverneur (du Congo)…Tombeur et son épouse (il s'agit du frère du général Tombeur)…* ». Mais le plus intéressant : « *…Nous n'avons pas plus rencontré de sous-marins boches que s'ils n'existaient pas. Quel bluff dans les journaux que ces torpillages de navires marchands par les sous-marins…* ». (English translation : "... we form the group of "large nape of the neck" at the Captain's table... Madame Henry, the Governor's wife (of the Congo) ... Tombeur and his wife (General Tombeur's brother) ..." But the most interesting: "... We did not meet any more German submarines than if they did not exist. What a bluff in the newspapers that these torpedoing of merchant ships by submarines ... ".)



POST OFFICE TELEGRAPHS.

Office Stamp. LIVERPOOL 5 MY 15 EXCHANGE

Handed in at | Office of Origin and Service Instructions | Words | Charges to pay

4 10/40 LAROCHELLE 30 =

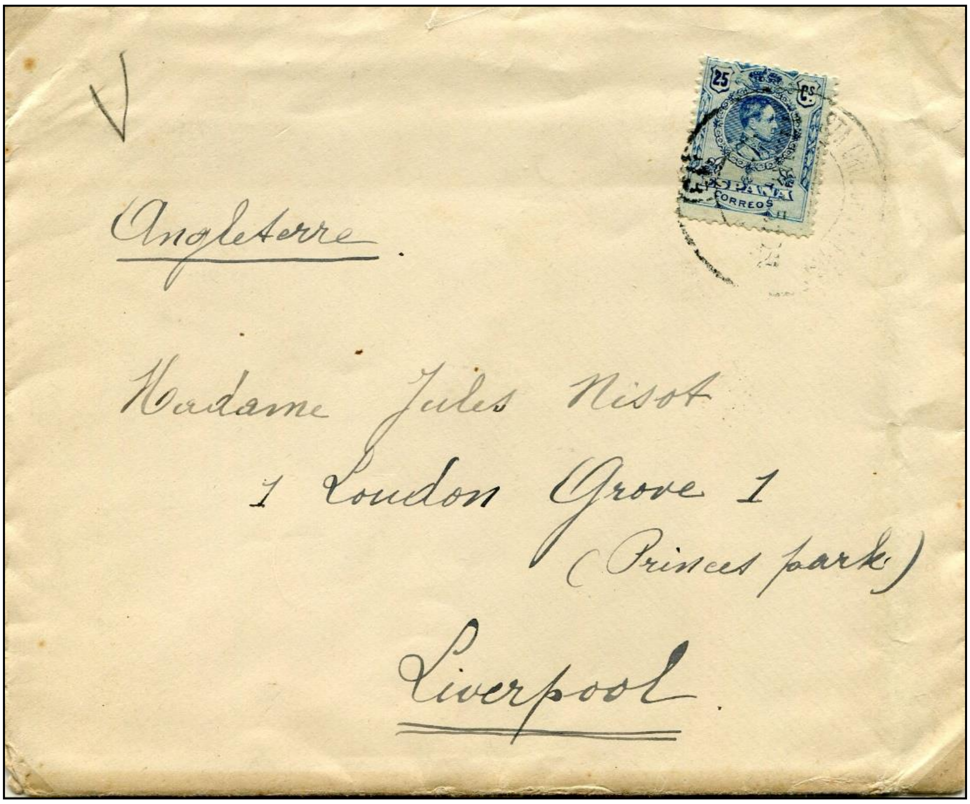
THIS FORM MUST ACCOMPANY ANY ENQUIRY RESPECTING THIS TELEGRAM.

Received here at 11/29 a.m.

TO

VERSPREEUWEN CONSUL BELGIQUE LIVERPOOL =
= BIEN ARRIVE CE MATIN LAPALLICE -- TOUT AU MIEUX -- TENDRES
BAISERS A ALICE ET MARIE CECILE AFFECTUEUSES AMITIES A TOUTE
LA FAMILLE LETTRES SUIVENT = JULES NISOT +

Telegram sent from La Rochelle to Liverpool on 5 May 1915 by Jules Nisot to his father in law, Mr. Verspreeuwen, Consul of Belgium at Liverpool.
(English translation of message: "Well arrived this morning at La Pallice – everything is fine - kind kiss to Alice ….."



Letter written by Jules Nisot aboard the *Elisabethville 1* on 9 May 1915 and posted at the stopover of Santa Cruz de Tenerife on 11 May 1915 to his wife at Liverpool. Franked at 25 c. by a Spanish stamp.

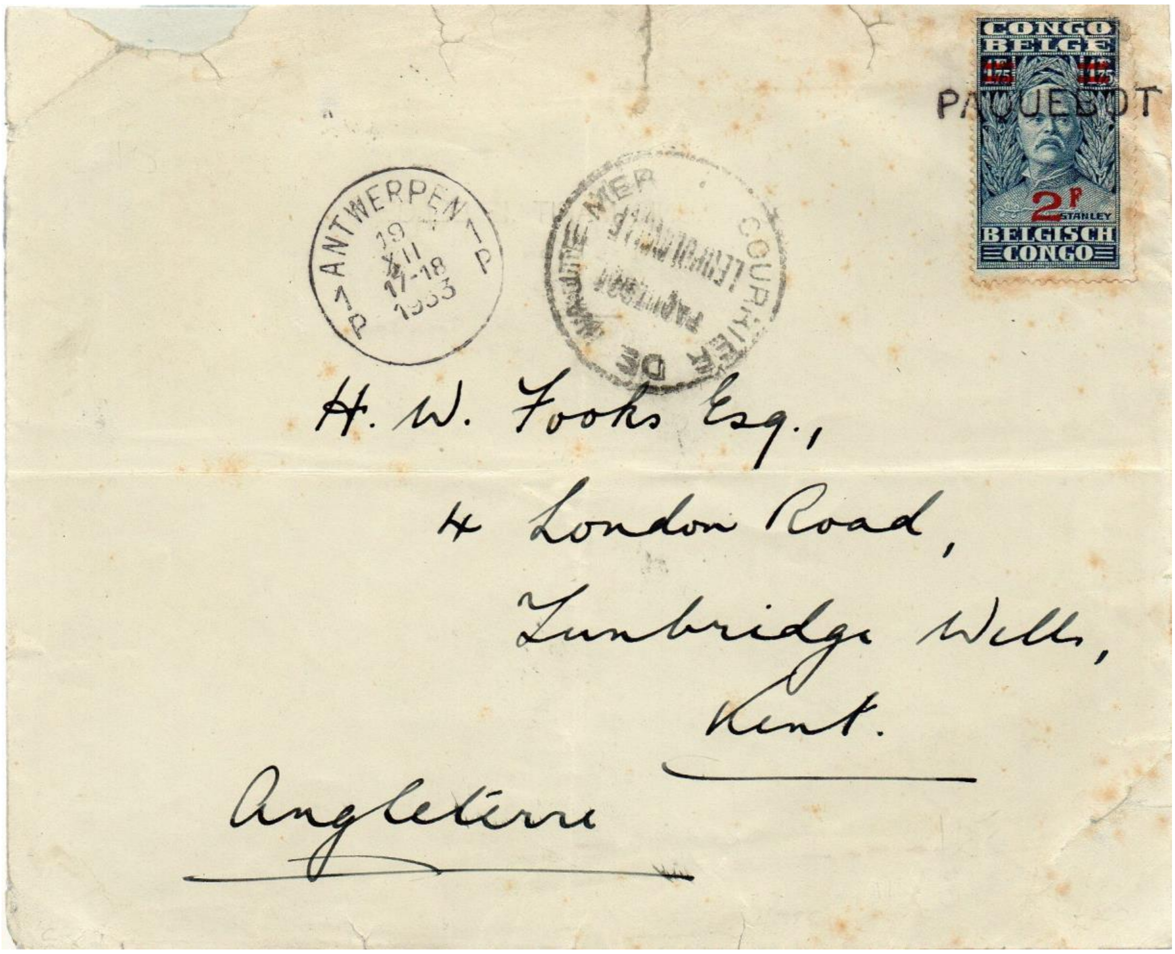
In the text the tone has changed: (in French) « *…Je continue ma lettre après le diner pendant lequel nous venons d'apprendre la terrible nouvelle du naufrage du « Lusitania » ! C'est affreux et quel émoi il y a dû y avoir à Liverpool à l'annonce de cette nouvelle ! Mais ne crains rien pour moi ; quand tu seras en possession de cette lettre, je serais paisiblement dans le Bas-Congo, bien loin de la guerre et de tout ses maux. D'ailleurs n'aie aucune crainte, et ceci m'a encore été confirmé à bord par des gens compétents, les allemands ne s'attaquent pas aux bateaux belges, les considérant comme leur propriété ! »*. (English translation: "... I continue my letter after dinner, during which we have just heard the terrible news of the shipwreck of the *Lusitania*!" It's awful and what a stir there must have been in Liverpool at the announcement of this news! But fear nothing for me ; when you are in possession of this letter, I shall be peacefully in the Lower Congo, far from the war and all its evils. Besides, I have no fear, and this has been confirmed to me on board by competent people, the Germans do not attack the Belgian ships, considering them as their property! ".)

On May 7, 1915, the British liner *Lusitania* was torpedoed by the German submarine *U20* in the south of Ireland, the shipwreck causing nearly 1,200 civilian casualties. In the United States, a neutral country with an "isolationist" tendency, the announcement of the disaster caused a large turnaround of public opinion in favour of Great Britain and this event will have a large part in the American decision to declare the war with Germany two years later.

Ironically, the steamer *Elisabethville* was in turn torpedoed by the German submarine *U71* on September 6th, 1917 in the harbour of Belle-Isle after attempting to sink the submersible enemy. This drama made 14 new victims.



May 1915 – Germany torpedoed the Lusitania – 1,198 civilians lose their live – the United State does not pardon. (picture from "www.lesjournauxdeguerre.be"



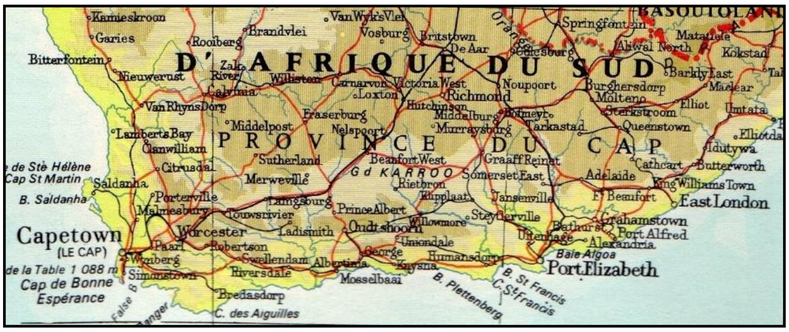
Cover posted at sea on paquebot *Leopoldville 5* – (1929/1940) and sent to (Royal) Tunbridge Wells / Kent / UK with transit by Anvers on December 19th, 1933 where the Belgain Congo stamp (2F / 1.75 F Stanley issue) was cancelled by the “PAQUEBOT” linear mark.
International Belgian Congo postage rate: 2 Fr (20gr) since 01.01.1931.

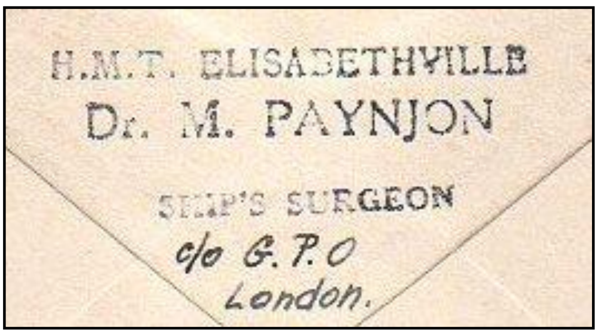


Cover written at sea on Belgian ship and posted at Plymouth on June 16th, 1937 to Anvers / Belgium. Franked with Belgian Congo stamps of Stanley issue.

H.M.T. *ELISABETHVILLE* (His Majesty Troopship) – Belgian paquebot transformed as troopship at Liverpool (Dec 16th, 1940 to Feb 3rd 1947).







Cover sent from East-London (Oos Londen) / South Africa on July 7th, 1942 to Northam / UK.
Sender: Dr Maurice PAYNJON, ship’s surgeon on H.M.T. *Elisabethville*, C/O G.P.O. London.
Letterhead cancelled: COMPAGNIE MARITIME BELGE / (LLOYD ROYAL) / Société Anonyme (Belgian Maritime Co (Lloyd Royal) / Limited Co).
Handwritten arrival date: 13.8.42 (August 13th, 1942) – number 11.



Cover sent from Anvers / Belgium on August 5th, 1946 to Mr Hurssel, Medical assistant on HMT *Thysville* (His Majesty Troopship) at Southampton / England.



Picture postcard of Tenerife written on board of paquebot *Leopoldville 6* - (1948/1967) to Lancing / Sussex / UK with transit by Anvers / Belgium where it arrived on June 28th1950 and where the framed bilingual PAKETBOOT / PAQUEBOT mark was applied.

Belgian Congo stamp (1947 Victory over slave traffickers - Lambermont issue) cancelled by paquebot cancel “COURRIER DE HAUTE MER / MV LEOPOLDVILLE” (High sea mail / Motor Vessel Leopoldville).

International Belgian Congo postage rate: 2.40 Fr (post card) since July 1st, 1949

Overfranked at 3.50 Fr.



Cover (printed matter) written on board of paquebot *Leopoldville 6* – (1948/1967) to Freshford / Nr Bath / UK. Posted at Matadi on October 28th, 1951 where the Belgian stamp was cancelled by the framed PAQUEBOTS mark.
Paquebot cancel “COURRIER DE HAUTE MER / MV LEOPOLDVILLE” (High sea mail / Motor Vessel Leopoldville) also cancelling the stamp.
The diamond mark is an accounting mark applied by the London sorting office. The Post Office occasionally carried out a census on the number of letters passing through the Sorting Office per day.



Cover (printed matter) written on board of paquebot *Mar Del Plata* (1938 / 1958) to Liverpool / UK with transit by Antwerpen Congodienst X-A (Belgium - Anvers Congo Service) where it arrived on October 27th, 1953)
Belgian stamps cancelled by paquebot cancel “COURRIER DE HAUTE MER / MS MAR DEL PLATA” (High sea mail / Motor ship) – in blue ink



M/S *Mar Del Plata*

Tanganyika Lake mails



Cover written on a Congolese ship on Tanganyika lake and posted at Kigoma on May 1st, 1939 to London / UK.
The Belgian Congo stamps were cancelled by the unframed linear mark PAQUEBOT of Kigoma (length = 45mm, without “OT” – damaged mark only seen in 1939).

International Belgian Congo postage rate: 2.50 Fr (20gr) from Feb 1st, 1934.
Overfranked at 2.75 Fr by 1.50 Fr National parks and 1.25 Fr Natives issues.

"Packet" or "Ship" letters

Source for type of cancellation: *PAQUEBOT CANCELLATIONS OF THE WORLD - AND MORE*, 4th Edition by Mike Dovey & Keith Morris. Published by the TPO & Seapost Society.

There were two basic types of handstamps found on mail sent by sea. The terms used of "PACKET" and "SHIP" letters are completely different. Mail transported to and from Britain by ships owned by the Government or under Post Office control was termed "Packet Letters". Mail conveyed by ships that were privately owned and not under Post Office control, were termed "Ship Letters".

Colour picture postcard sent from Thysville on 9 February 1906 to Watford / UK with transit by Matadi on 10 February 1906 and paquebot cancel « SOUTHAMPTON / 15 MR 06 / SHIP•LETTER ». (212A)
International postage rate for private postcard (from May 1st, 1902) = 15c.
Franked by 15c ochre Mols Congo Free State issue (1896)





Postal stationery at 10c (Stibbe nr 18) with additional franking of 5c green Mols Congo Free State issue (1900) sent from Leopoldville on 19 June 1907 to London.

Paquebot cancel « SOUTHAMPTON / 22 JY 07 / SHIP•LETTER » (212A) applied on the printed stamp which had not been cancelled at departure.





Cover sent from Boma on 5 October 1908 to New York / USA.

American Consular service cover with, on reverse, a rectangular cancel and wax seal of the Consulate.
Paquebot cancel applied « SOUTHAMPTON / 24 OC 08 / SHIP•LETTER ». (212A)

International postage rate (from 01.01.1886): letter at 50c / 15gr – thus here 1.50 Fr for a letter weighing 31 to 45 g.

Franked- by 50c olive Mols Congo Free State issue (1900) – 3 stamps.



Cover sent from Leopoldville in January 1908 to Gueydan / Louisiana / USA.
Paquebot cancel applied « SOUTHAMPTON / 15 FE 08 / PACKET•LETTER ». (215A)
International postage rate (from 01.01.1886): letter at 50c / 15g. franked by 50c Mols Congo Free State issue (1900).



Postal stationery at 10c. (Stibbe nr 43) posted aboard a ship and sent to Caterham Valley / Surrey / UK. It was cancelled at Liverpool with « PAQUEBOT / POSTED AT SEA / RECEIVED / 8 FE 15 / LIVERPOOL ». (116A)
International postage rate (from April 1st, 1910): postcard = 10c.

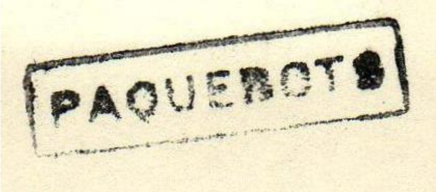


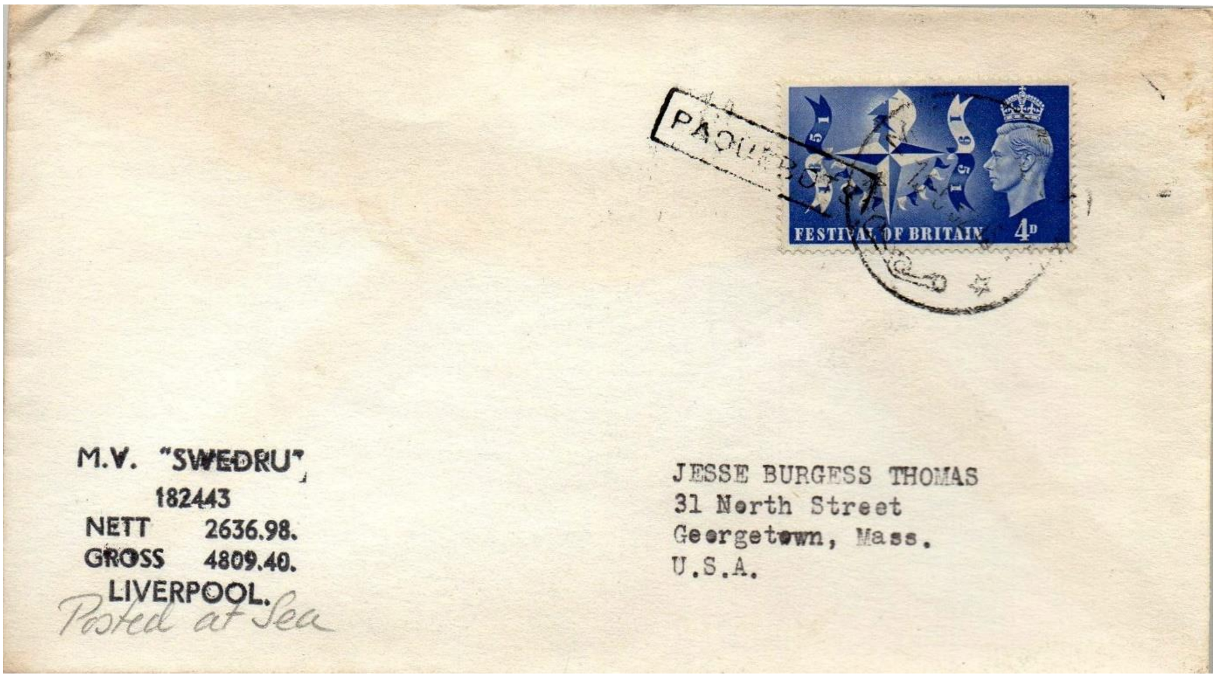
Postal stationery at 10c. (Stibbe nr 43) used as postcard and franked by a Spanish stamp of 10c. affixed on the printed stamp, written when the vessel called at Las Palmas on November 4th, 1920. It was sent to London by a passenger on the steamer *S.S. MATEBA* (owned from 1919 to 1922 by the Elder Dempster & Co - Liverpool). The single line cachet of the ship had been applied in violet ink on the card.

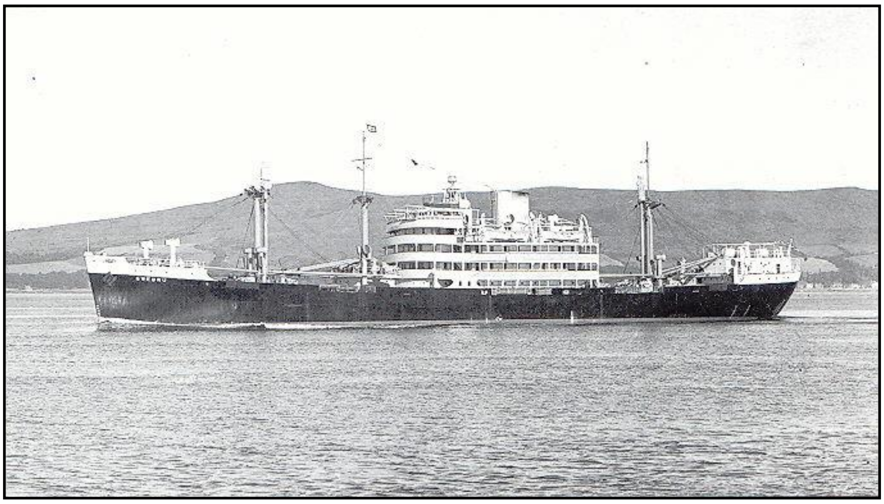
At Liverpool, the paquebot cancel was applied on the uncancelled Spanish stamp: « PAQUEBOT / POSTED AT SEA / RECEIVED / 13 NO 20 / LIVERPOOL ». (116A)

Matadi harbour « Paquebots » mark on UK mail

PAQUEBOT mark of MATADI applied on UK postage on cover posted on high sea

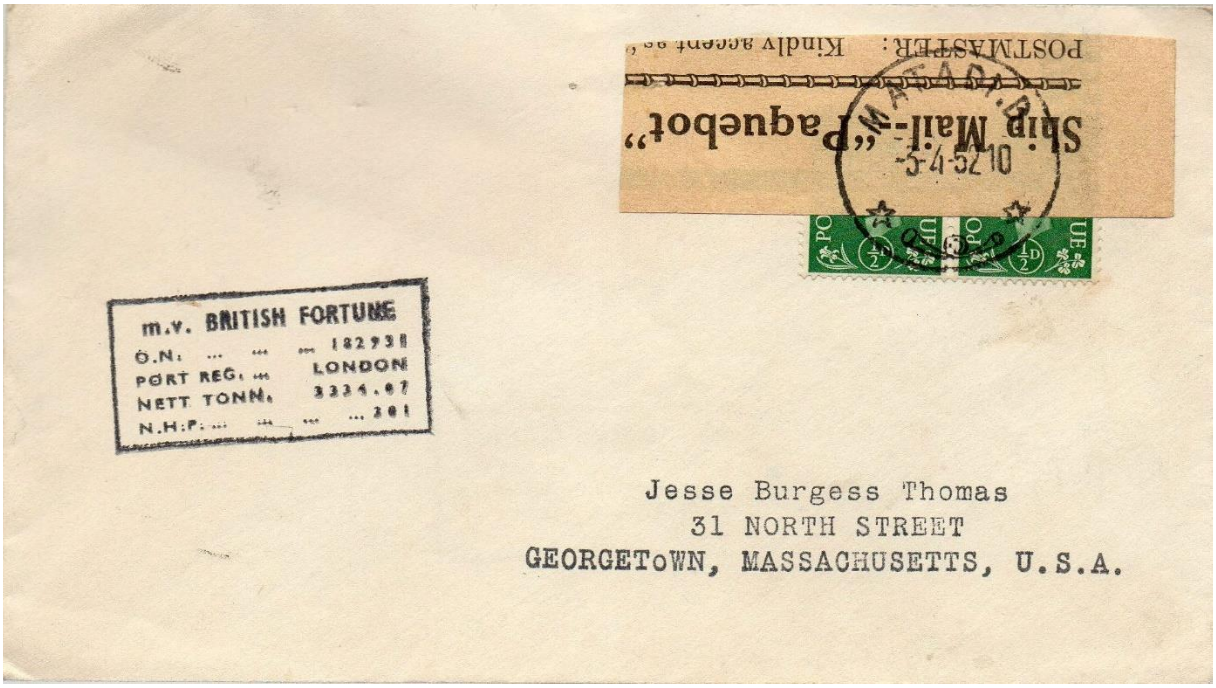




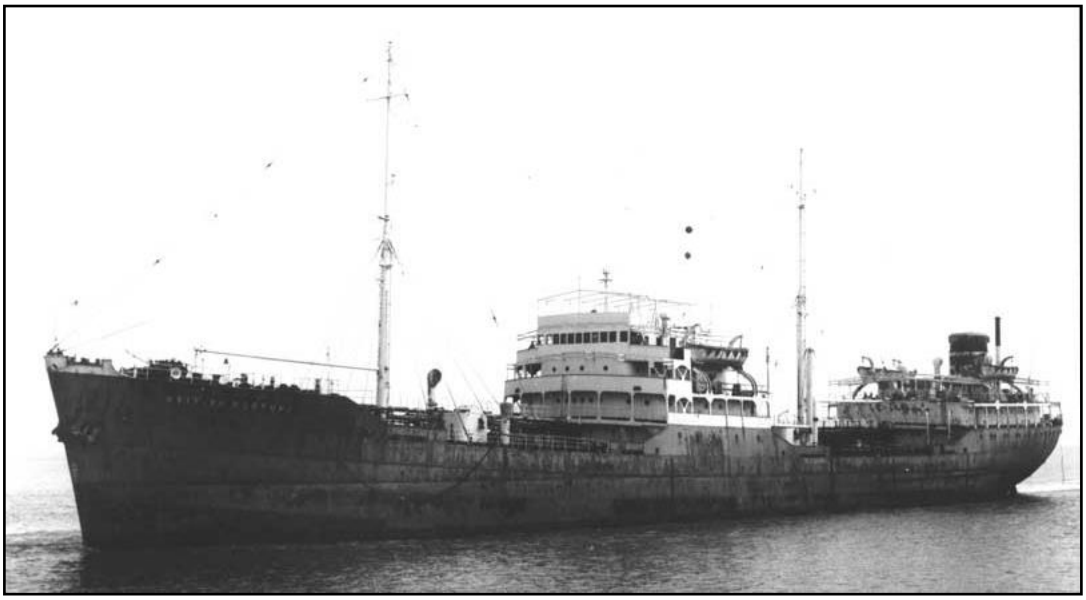


Cover written on high sea aboard the *M.V. SWEDRU (2)* (British mixed cargo belonged to the Elder Dempster Company - Liverpool) and posted at the line stop of Matadi on 13 May 1952 to Georgetown / Mass. / USA.

The framed harbour mark “PAQUEBOTS” and the datestamp of Matadi cancelled the British postage not yet cancelled.



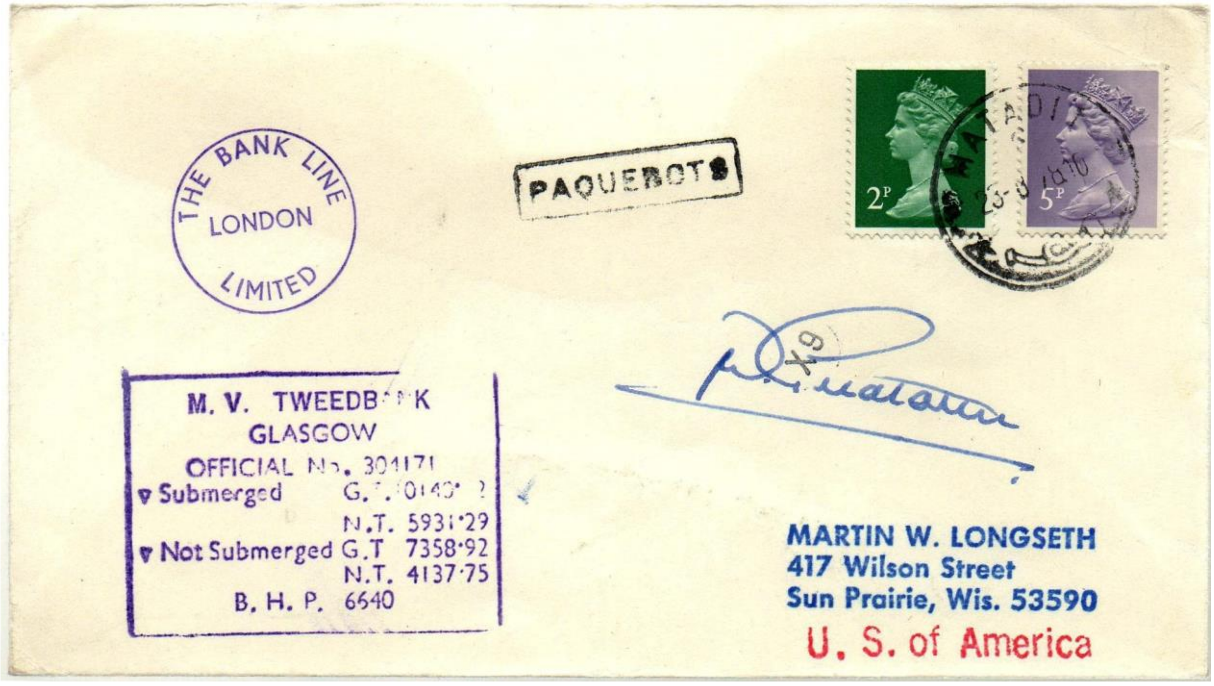




« Ship Mail – « Paquebot » - POSTMASTER

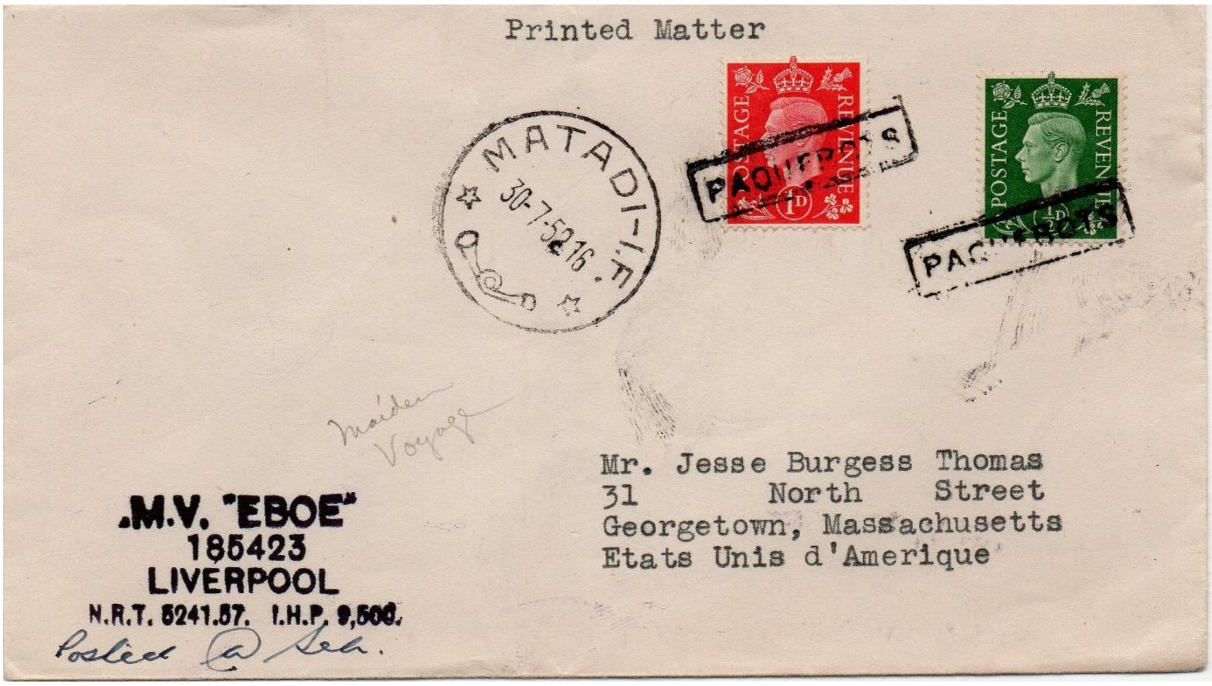
Cover written on high sea aboard the *MV British Fortune* (British mixed cargo belonged to the BP Tanker Co. Ltd - London) and posted at the line stop of Matadi on 3 April 1952 to Georgetown / Mass. / USA.

The datestamp of Matadi cancelled the British postage not yet cancelled and a label cut of a form with text "Ship Mail – "Paquebot" – Postmaster" (in place of the framed linear mark "PAQUEBOTS" – lost or in repair ?)



Cover written on high sea aboard the *M.V. TWEEDBANK* (British mixed cargo belonged to The Bank Line Company - Glasgow) and posted at the line stop of Matadi on 23 August 1978 to Georgetown / Mass. / USA. **Sun Prairie / Wis. / USA.**

The framed harbour mark "PAQUEBOTS" and the datestamp of Matadi cancelled the British postage not yet cancelled.



Printed matter cover posted at sea aboard *MV EBOE* (owned by Elder Dempster Lines – Maiden voyage) and posted at Matadi 30 July 1952 to Georgetown / Massachusetts / USA.

The framed PAQUEBOTS mark of Matadi harbour cancelled the British stamps not yet cancelled.

Maritime mail by British steamers

Since 1883, the shipping company "Hatton and Cookson" was linking Liverpool to Banana, then in October 1885, Union Castle Line established the first direct link between Antwerp and Banana. In 1891 the African Steamship Company (bought by the firm Elder-Dempster) and the German shipping company "Woermann" installed a monthly service between Antwerp and Boma. The ships left Antwerp on the 6th of each month. The mail conveyed by these ships only exceptionally includes a mark of the vessel, only a handwritten note put by the sender makes it possible, in this case, to identify the steamer carrying the correspondence.

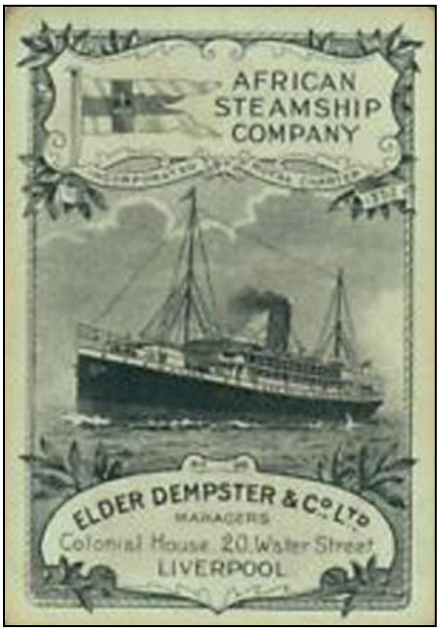


Postal stationery Stibbe #2 sent from Banana 3 November 1886 to Brussels. Handwritten note "par l'Angola via Liverpool". Arrival cancel of Brussels on 8 December 1886.
The *Angola* ship owned by the Elder-Dempster Company.



Postal stationery 15c Stibbe #5 sent from Boma on July, 23th, 1891 to Brussels where it arrived on Sept. 30th,1891. Handwritten note by sender *S/S Kinsembo*; ship owned by the "British and African Steam Co".

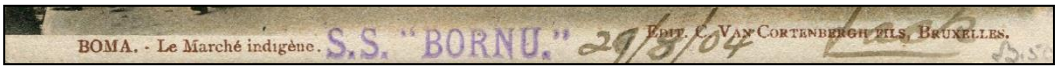






Postal stationery 15c Stibbe #11 sent from Banana on 21 December 1894 to Brussels, arrived on 28 January 1895.
Handwritten note "par S.S. Akassa"; ship owned by the African Steamship Co.



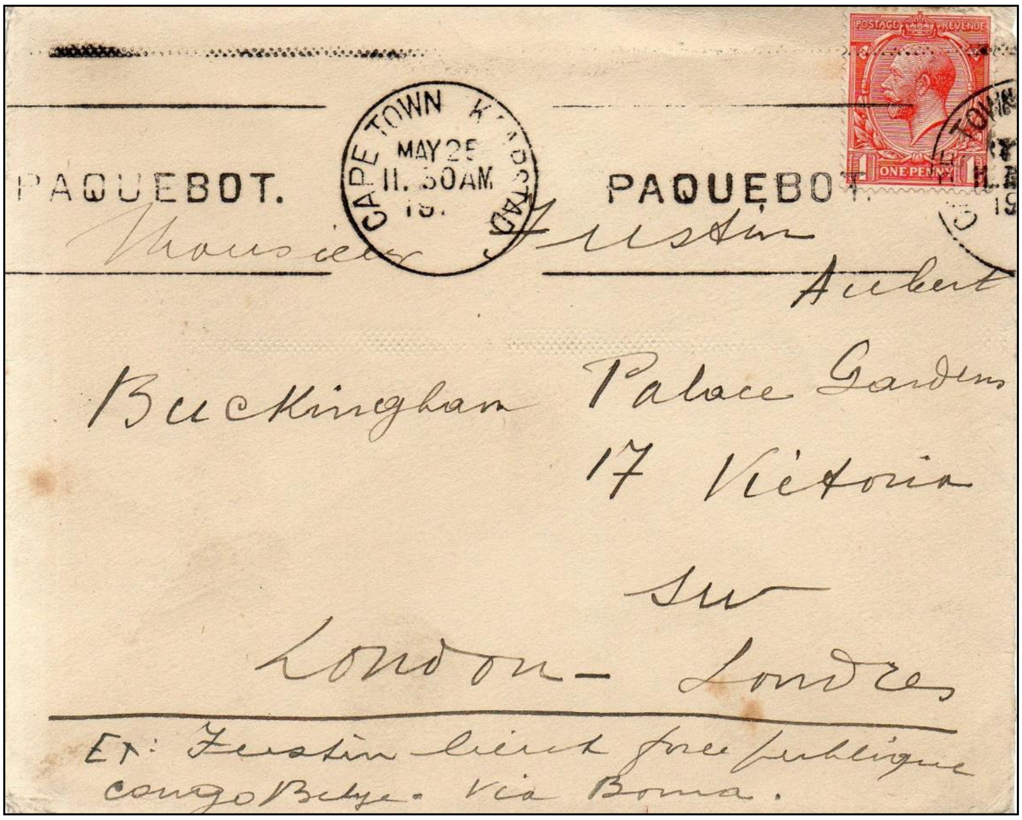


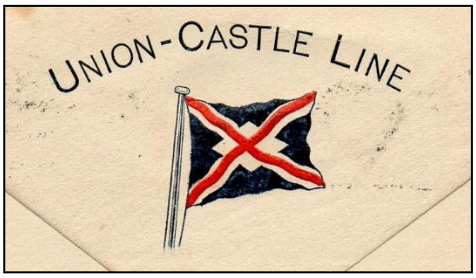
Picture postcard sent from Boma on 30 August 1904 to Birmingham / UK.

Small linear mark in violet ink S.S. "BORNU." applied at the bottom of the view side.

Ship is owned by the Elder-Dempster Company.

International postage rate (from May 1st, 1902): picture postcard = 15c.
Franked by 5c green and 10c carmine Mols Congo Free State issue (1900).





Cover written by a Lieutenant of the “Force Publique” (Belgian Congo Army) posted aboard of a British steamer of the Union Castle Line (see header on reverse) and sent from Capetown on May 25th, 1919 to London.

This Belgian colon was probably en route to join his workplace in Katanga, from Capetown to Elisabethville by train via Broken Hill / Rhodesia. The sender has noted at the bottom of the envelope, his future address in Belgian Congo.

WW I

1. Belgian Refugees in UK

1. Introduction

Source: http://www.onserfdeel.be/frontend/files/userfiles/files/BelgianRefugees%202.pdf

When Germany invaded Belgium on 4 August 1914 and stories about atrocities by the German troops quickly spread, many Belgians fled their homes. Roughly a quarter of a million Belgians crossed the Channel during the war years. The first Belgians reached the southern ports of England in late August 1914. Initially in small numbers and mostly at their own expense, they moved inland and settled, usually in and around London.

In the space of just a few weeks, the numbers of Belgians arriving in England increased dramatically. On 15 October, the day Ostend fell, an estimated 26,000 Belgians arrived in Folkestone alone. The ports of the southeast acted as a transition area: from there most Belgians were sent to dispersal centres in London, such as Alexandra Palace and Earls Court, and were allocated to a local community anywhere in Britain that had volunteered to host them.

During the war, more than 2,500 local Belgian refugee committees were formed.
The central organisation was an effort shared by the newly established War Refugees Committee and the existing Local Government Board. The Belgians did not rely on British charity alone, official bodies such as the Belgian Legation in London and the Comité Officiel Belge worked alongside the British organisations.
Equally pivotal to the well-being of the significant Belgian community in Britain were the charity events organised jointly by the Belgians and British.

Belgians were mainly employed in the war industry. The munitions factories created labour opportunities for tens of thousands of Belgians. In fact, able men were brought even from the Netherlands. Large local Belgian communities, of several thousand refugees each, emerged in places like Dartford, Richmond, Letchworth, Barrow-in-Furness and Birtley, Gateshead.



2. Postal history



Belgian Congo postal stationery, used as postcard sent from Clapton / London on June 28th, 1915 to Blackpool / UK (North of Liverpool) – mail between Belgian Refugees (both have been colons in Congo)

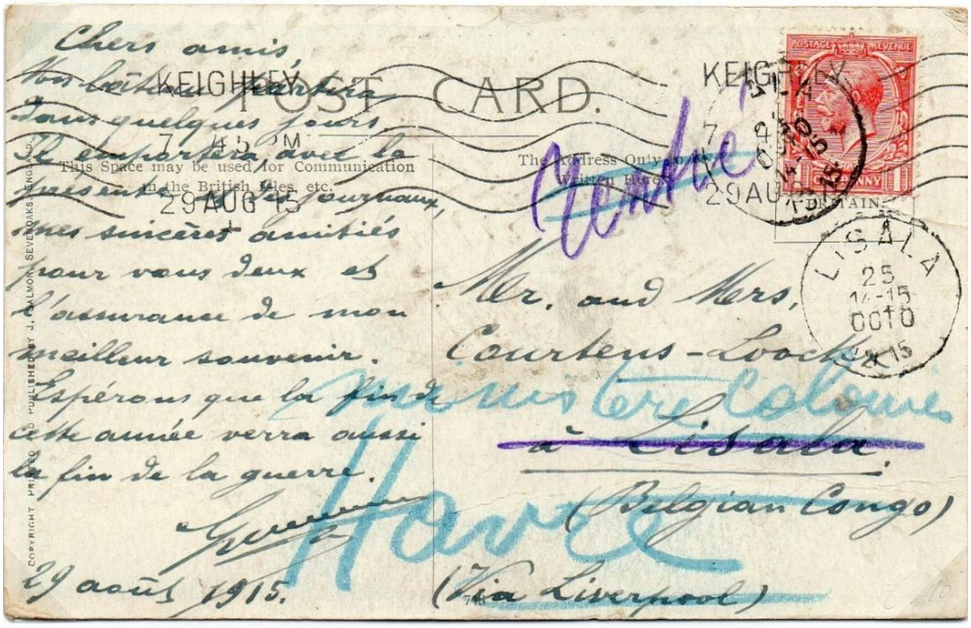
Postal stationery (Stibbe catalogue #31TT – demand card) of 15c with typographic overprint CONGO BELGE and surcharge “5c” (under the additional stamp) with a new franking by British stamp for domestic rate.

Interesting text: in french
« depuis deux mois,(…) je suis employé comme travailleurs dans un grand magasin de bois.(…) Mr Gérard est reparti le 19 pour Elsiabethville, vous pourrez lui écrire, il est secrétaire du Directeur du CFK à Elisabethville. (…)
Je suis en rapport avec mon beau-frère qui est sous-officier 1er de ligne Dépôt de la 5ème Division d’Armée à St Omer Capelle près de Dunkerque. (…)
J’a reçu une carte de mon cousin d’Anvers Vice Consul du Brésil, partie de Sijnavenhague le 8 juin, que ma femme et mon fils avaient été chez lui pour venir me retrouver mais ont dû retourner en Wallonie. Je n’ai pas de chance. (…).
J’ai demandé à être occupé dans le travail des munitions ».

English translation:
"Since two months (….) I am employed as a worker in a large timber shop. (...) Mr Gérard left on the 19th to Elisabethville, you can write to him, he is secretary of the Director of the CFK in Elisabethville. (...)
I am in contact with my brother-in-law who is sub-officer at 1st Line of Depot 5th Army Division at St Omer Capelle near Dunkerque.
I received a postcard from my cousin of Antwerp, Vice Consul of Brazil, sent from Sijnavenhague on June 8th, he says that my wife and son have been at his home to come to find me but had to return to Wallonia.(in Belgium) I have no chance.(…)
I asked to work in munition factory".

Sender : A. DELCOURT – Ex Colon at « Chemin de Fer du Katanga (CFK) » (Katangan Railways).





Postcard sent from Keighley / UK on August 29th, 1915 to Lisala where it arrived on October 25th. « Lisala » cancelled and handwritten note in violet pencil « rentré » (back). It was then forwarded to « Ministère des Colonies au Havre », (bleu pencil) (Colonial Ministry at Havre (France).

Interesting text in French : « Espérons que la fin de cette année verra aussi la fin de la guerre ».
English translation: « Hope that the end of this year will also see the end of the war».

Postal stationery with view sent from Boma on May 18th, 1918 to a Belgian Refugee / Liège House / Bushey – Herts / England.

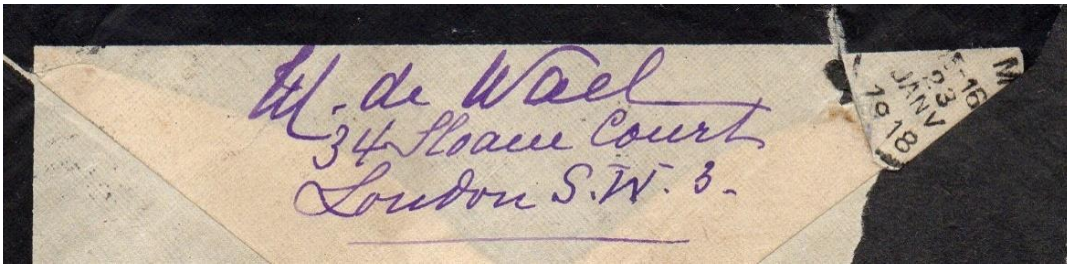


On September 5th, 1914, the Bushey Committee for Relief of Destitute Belgians was created.
Mr George Jaggard gave his 30-room house "Elmcote" in Aldenham Road which was able to accommodate the 30 women & children.
The newspaper *Watford Illustrated* reported the following week that 33 Belgian refugees had arrived from Liège (Belgium) and that the house was renamed "LIEGE HOUSE".

Interesting text (in French)
« Boma le 8 mai 1918,
Nous sommes entrés hier à Boma, salués par 21 coups de canons. Le gouverneur général (Eugène HENRY) était à bord et on lui a fait une réception superbe. La musique militaire congolaise jouait la Brabaçonne, Sambre et Meuse, etc.. et impeccablement. Un bataillon noir rendait les honneurs et toutes les notabilités en grande tenue l'attendaient sur le quai »

English translation:
"Boma on May 8th, 1918,
We entered Boma yesterday, greeted with 21 guns. The Governor General (Eugene HENRY) was on board and was given a superb reception. Congolese military music played the Brabaçonne, Sambre and Meuse, etc .. and impeccably. A native battalion gave the honours, and all the notables in full dress, awaited him on the quay "





Mourning letter sent from London on 10 October 1917 to Boma where arrived on January 23th, 1918.

Violet British censor circle cancel « PASSED CENSOR – C.14 » applied at Capetown.

Routing: London – Capetown by Royal Mail Steamships (weekly schedule) and next by Portuguese ship to Boma with Angola transit.

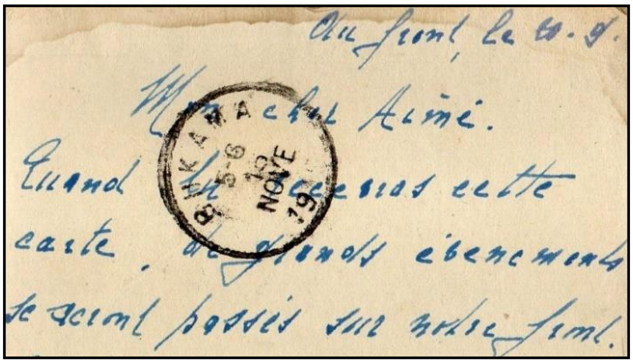
International postage rate at 2 1/2d per 1 oz. (1907).

Sender: Belgian refugee in London – Mr de Wael.

2. British Postcard



British postcard dated September 20, 1918, and posted at PMB 4 (Poste Militaire Belge) of the Centralization Office at Calais, to Kabinda, where arrived on December 19th via Bukama on November 15th - Capetown route (requested).



In the sender's address Z-159 3 / III - according to the last period of the military postal codes: Z (from 20 January 1918) corresponds to Troops of Army - Heavy Artillery Brigade - 1st Heavy Artillery Regiment - IIIrd Group - 3rd Battery. "A B e / c" = Belgian Army in the field.

This British postcard is very common in the Belgian army. The soldiers asked their correspondent in the United Kingdom to send them packets of cards because otherwise they had to buy them themselves and that was too expensive in view of the pay received.

Interesting text (in French) : « je vais donc participer à une grande bataille, les préparatifs sont formidables et l'attaque imminente. J'espère bien m'en tirer entier »

English translation:
"I will therefore participate in a great battle, the preparations are immense and the attack imminent. I hope to get out of it safely."

The card was sent in September 1918 and the great final offensive had already begun. Noises ran through the allied armies. Since everything was centred on this campaign, the censorship was somewhat neglected, and since we were advancing; it was like a certain victory. There was less mail during this period, the troops were too busy soldiering and communications were more difficult between the front and the rear. Besides, censorship scarcely glanced at mails to the Congo. The journey took a month or more depending on the route. By that time the information was no longer valuable because it was too old.

3.British censorhip in WW I

1. Introduction

Censor tape PASSED BY CENSOR. Xxxx. (short summary by Graham Mark).

London numbers were 1-1500, 4xxx 5xxx

Liverpool was the only other major censorship station and their numbers were 1,500-3,999 and 6,xxx. Liverpool only dealt with terminal mail to and from the Americas and to and from West Africa. I have only recorded one item 1,500 and it is not clear whether that was censored in London or Liverpool. It was from Ireland to England. Liverpool office only began work in December 1915 and some London staff moved to Liverpool and took their number with them.

There were also small stations in some ports but their staff were censors sent out from the two major stations so it is difficult to determine their numbers, except for Gibraltar where a larger database of covers has been put together.

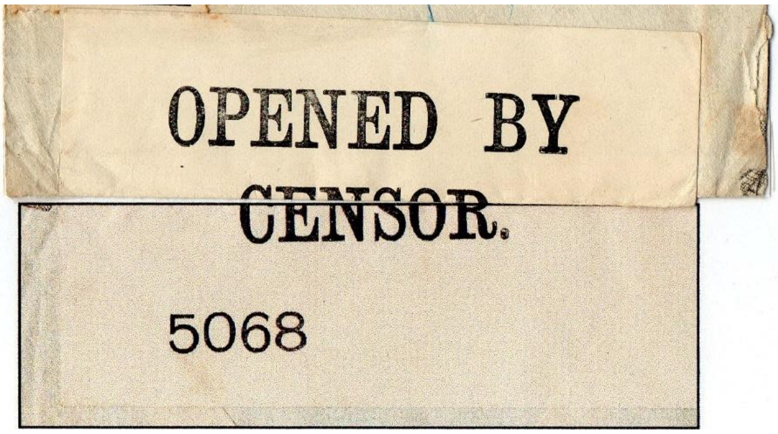
Transit mail was censored in London, but I have seen a very small number that were opened at Liverpool.

Censorship of civilian mail generally ceased on 21 June 1919, but some categories of mails had reduced levels of examination since January 1919, eg from January 1919 for PoWs in this country the censorship reduced to about 15% (ie closed with a label if it had been examined but if only marked with a handstamp it had been passed unread. All censorship of the PoW mails ceased 21 September).

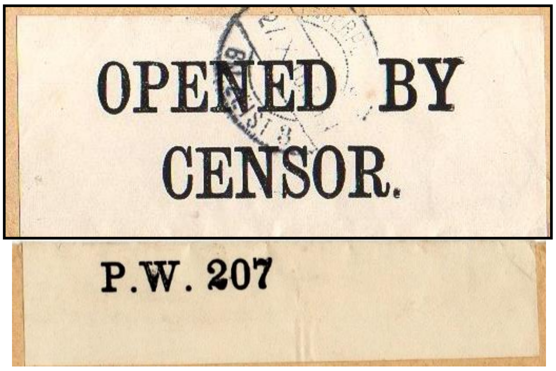
For Belgian terminal mails the censorship ceased on 7 May and for Belgian transit mails on 11 June 1919.

Censorship continued after 21 June for mails to and from areas of continuing conflict (eg North Russia) until 20 September 1919.

PASSED BY CENSOR. PW xxx
Prisoners of War and note that internees' mail was also handled in that section.



PASSED BY CENSOR. Xxxx



PASSED BY CENSOR. PW xxx

2. Postal history

OPENED BY CENSOR



Cover sent from Elisabethville on October 23th, 1916 (year unreadable) to a Belgian Refugee at La Haye / Holland. Probably routed by Cape Town. Holland postman cancel at arrival.

British censor tape "OPENED BY CENSOR – 5068" applied at London.

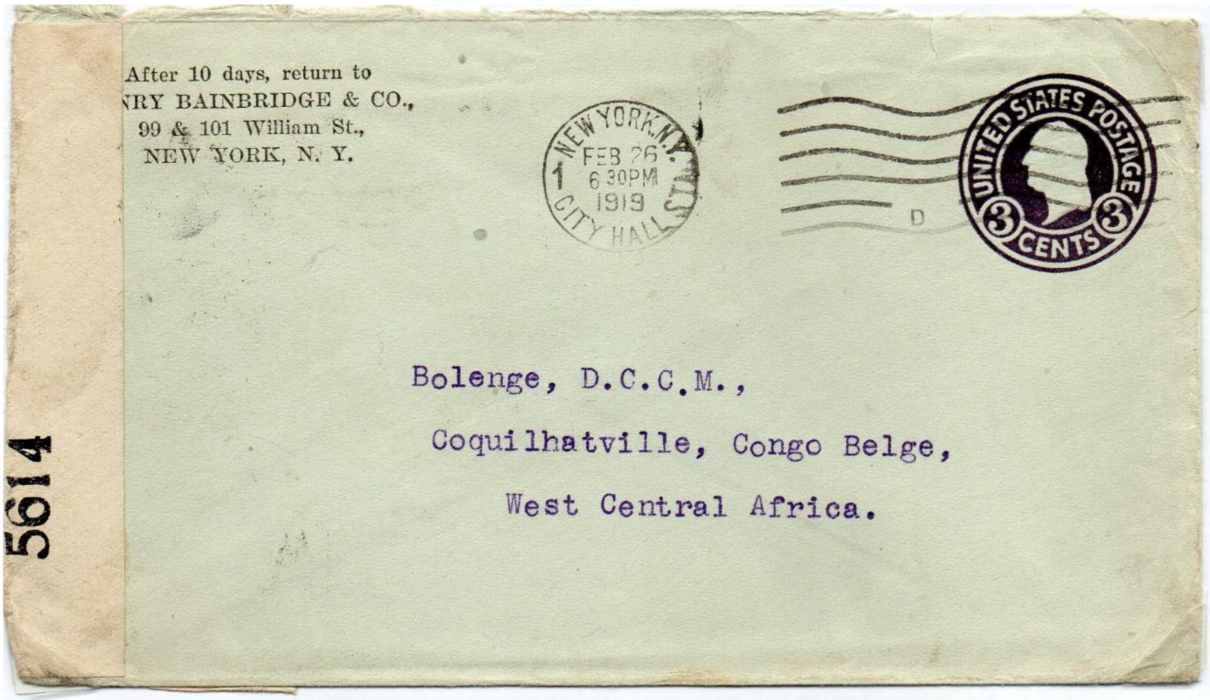
Belgian Congo Postage rates: international letter (from 04.01.1910) at 25c.
Franking: 25c Mols Bilingual 1915 issue



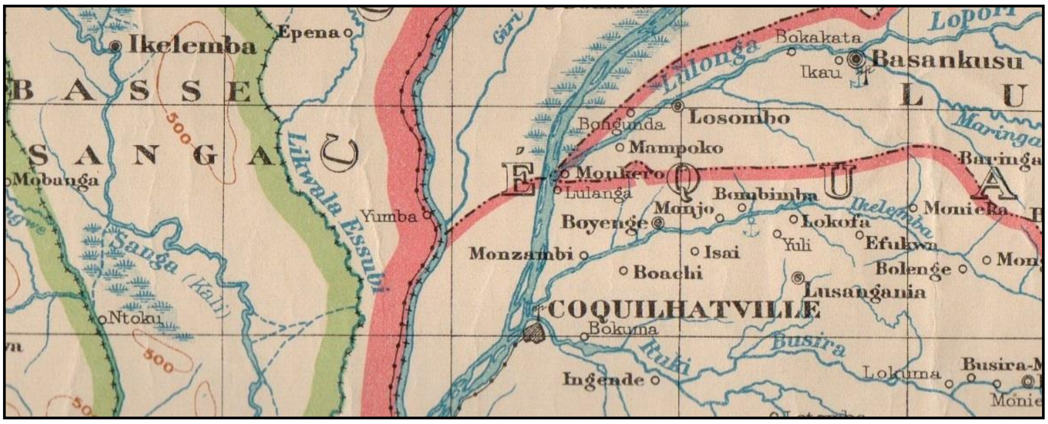
Two different opinions:

-The sender has probably written his letter during his journey to the Katanga area in the Railways of Benguela (Angola) and franked it with Angolan stamps. However he didn't post his letter in Angola but well at arrival in Congo with a new franking with Belgian Congo stamp.
The Belgian postman at Elisabethville has forgotten to put the "O" mark below the Angolan stamps for indicating the "not valid" state of those stamps.

-If this travelled via Cape Town I would expect it would be censored there. Alternatively, it could have gone via Benguela or Loanda and Lisbon to London, or via Matadi and a Belgian vessel. I have a booklet *Mailboat Services from Europe to the Belgian Congo (1879-1922)* by Abbe G Gudenkauf, published by Cockrill in 1982. This lists plenty of voyages in the time of WWI but the timetables are incomplete as some detail is missing.

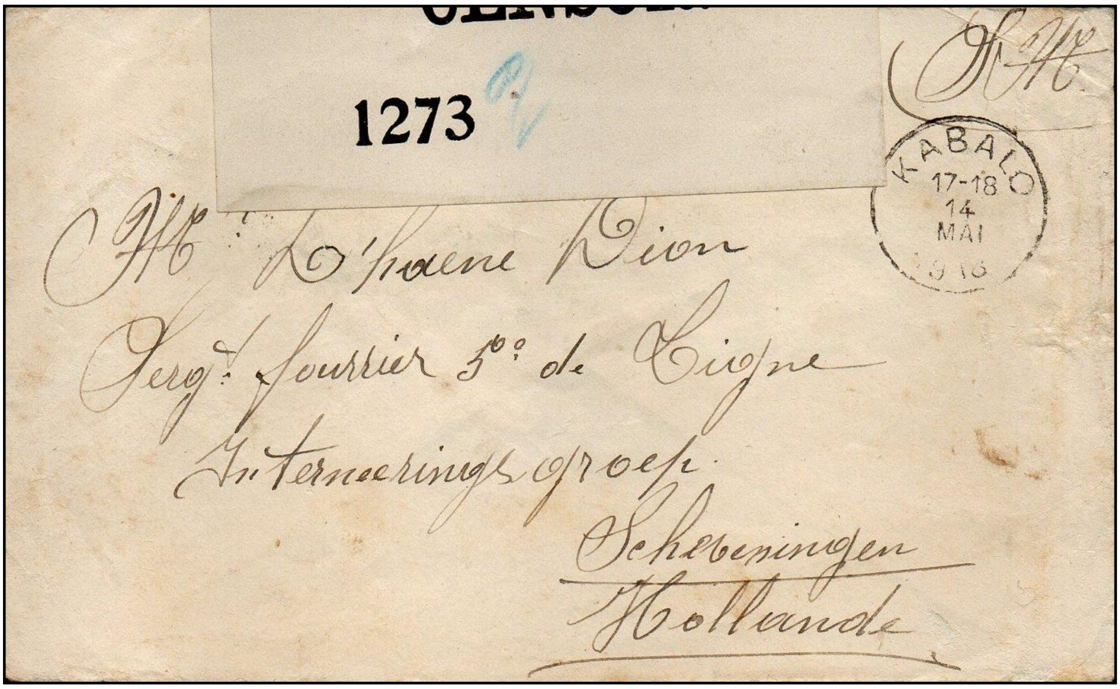


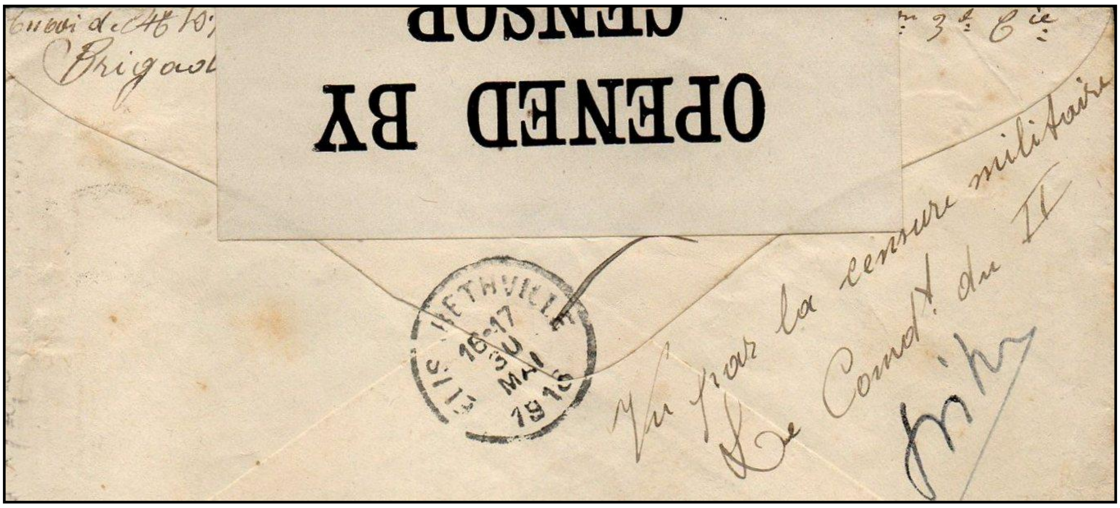




Postal stationery (envelope) sent from New York on February 26th, 1919 to Bolenge (near Coquilhatville) with transit by Lourenço Marques / Mozambique on April 27th, Loanda / Angola on May 30th, Matadi / Belgian Congo on June 9th and Coquilhatville on June 24th.

British censor tape « OPENED BY CENSOR 5614 » applied at London.
Addressee: DCCM = Disciples of Christ Congo Mission.
This was clearly sent to LM in error and had to be sent back to the west coast at Loanda. With the overland route to Loanda or Benguela or Matadi it seems less likely that outbound mail was regularly sent via Capetown.





Cover sent from Kabalo on 14 May 1918, to a Sergeant Quartermaster of the 3rd Regiment of the Line interned at Scheveningen in Holland which transited Elisabethville on May 30th.

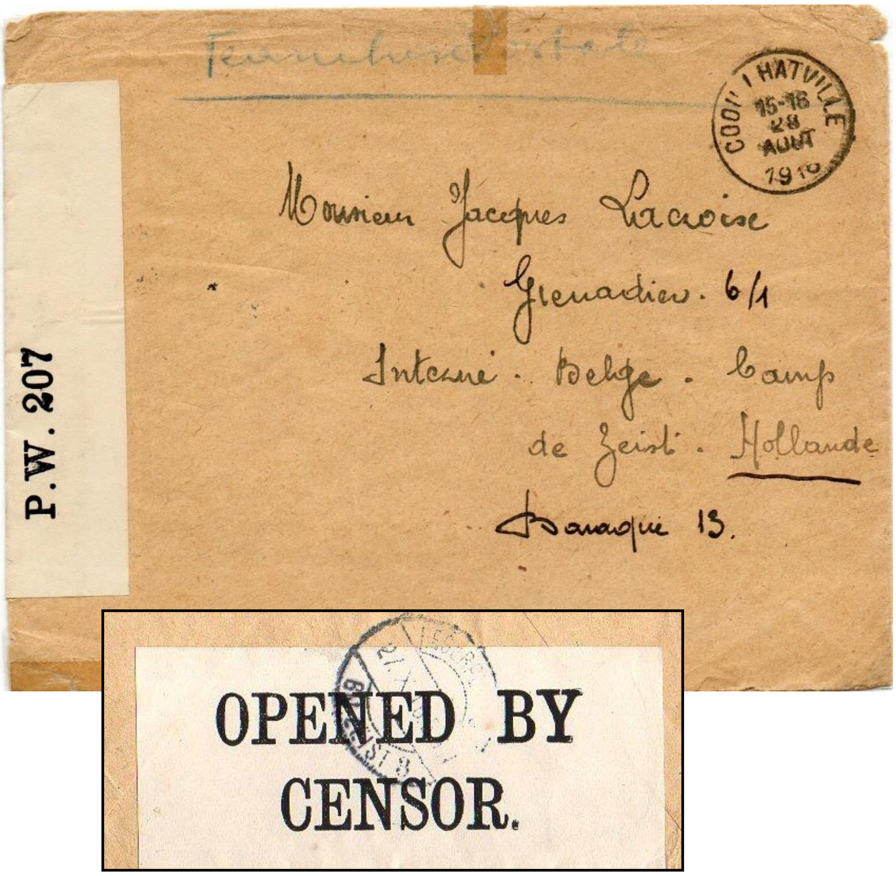
Congolese handwritten censorship "Vu par la censure militaire – Le Comdt du II" (Seen by military censorship - The Commandant of II [Battalion])
Sender: Sub-officer of the Public Force 2nd Battalion 3rd Co. - Southern Brigade

Free postage for soldier on operations – handwritten note "S.M." (Service Militaire = On Active Service)

Travelled to Europe by a British steamer making the weekly connection Capetown - London.
Censored tape "PASSED BY CENSOR 1273 with PW in manuscript" applied in London.

Interneeringsgroep = a group of internees around an agricultural or industrial activity. It was the industrialist who was to house the internees working in his factory. As many men in the Netherlands were also under arms there was a lack of personnel. So it was not a camp in the strict sense of the word. The internees had to sign an undertaking that they would not attempt to escape.

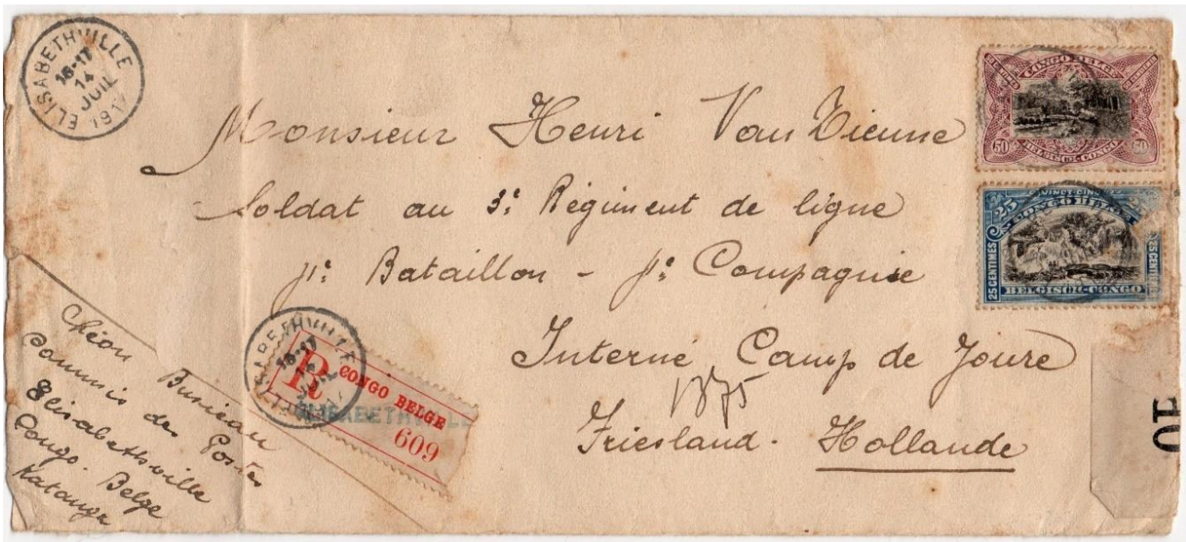
OPENED BY CENSOR – PW xxx (Prisoners of War)



Cover sent from Coquilhatville on August 26th, 1916 to a “Grenadier / Belgian internee at the Camp de Zeist / Netherlands – “Baraque 13” (hut number 13) where it arrived on October 27th.

The cover was censored in London with the censored tape OPENED BY CENSOR P.W. (Prisoners of War) by censor 207 dealing with mail from or to prisoners of war and internees.

Arrival cancel at the Camp: LEGERPLAATS / BIJ ZEIST 3. Used by the Office of Camp II. Free shipping for Prisoners of War.



Registered cover sent from Elisabethville on July 14th, 1917 to Belgian internee in Camp of Joure / Netherlands where it arrived on Sept 4th.

Transit by London Registered on Aug 27th – British censor tape “OPENED BY CENSOR P.W. (Prisoners of War” applied by censor nr 93.



Free shipping to internee only for the first weight.
International postage rate: 25c (by 15gr) + 25c for registration.
Franked by 25c + 50c (first plate with “white smoke” of the train)
Mols Bilingual issue of 1915 for a letter of 31 – 45 gr.

4. Belgian Censorship at Folkestone

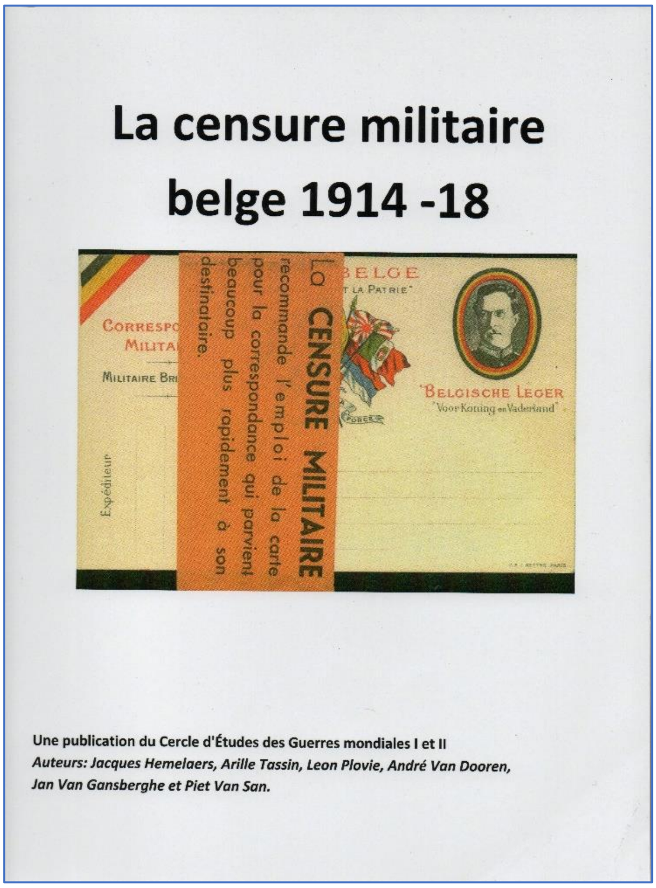
In the spring of 1915, a first Belgian censorship office was set up at Folkestone, in the offices of the Belgian Consulate and after a second in Calais. Both offices worked until the end of the war. The Folkestone office had been designed on the English model and had a laboratory for the chemical analysis of letters. Thanks to adequate resources and staff, and good relations from the beginning with the English, it had a exceptional functioning.

It was commanded by a competent officer often quoted, Captain-Commander J. F.C.A. MAGE, former head of the Belgian military security service. At the end of April 1916, he was also appointed head of the Calais censorship and ensured a good working relationship between the two Belgian censorship offices.
During the period from Nov. to Dec. 1914, letters arriving at Folkestone from Belgium and the Netherlands to France, England or Belgium were censored by the British (War Office - control in London). They also took care of the mail from the Belgian soldiers at the front and from the Belgian refugees landing in UK.
At the end of February 1915, the Belgian authorities organized a censorship service at Folkestone which was to process the following mails:

- From Belgian civilians and the Belgian Army to the Netherlands (which was essential for Belgian postal traffic)
- From the Belgian Army to the Occupied Belgium, via private agencies headquartered in the Netherlands or at Baarle-Hertog
- From the Occupied Belgium, transmitted by some authorized bodies

The offices had a variety of work tools including censor tapes, cancels to confirm censorship, marks and numbers for censors, etc ....
For certain periods, it is possible to identify the office of censorship (Calais or Folkestone) by identifying the typography of the tapes and marks, by the color used, etc. For other periods, it is not possible, when the same tools were used both in Calais and Folkestone.

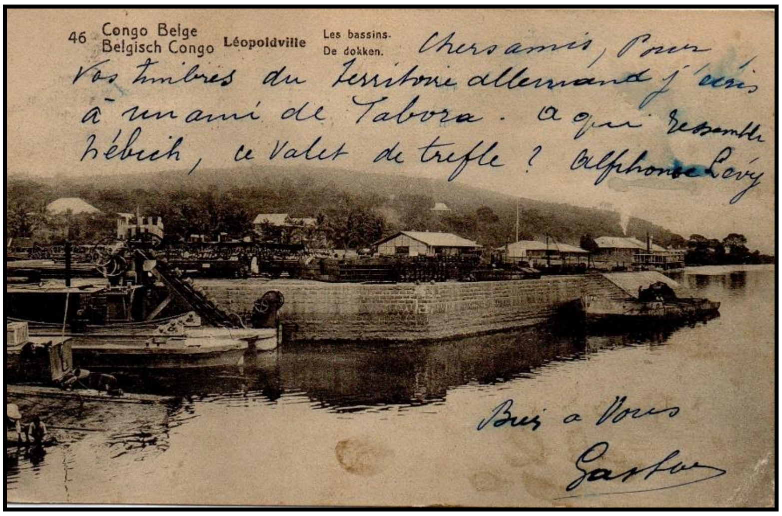
Reference: *La censure militaire belge en 1914-18* published by « Cercle d'Etudes des Guerre Mondiales I et II » – authors: Jacques Hemelaers, Arille Tassin, Léon Plovie, André Van Dooren, Jan Van Gansberghe and Piet Van San.



Postal stationery dispatched from Irumu on 10 February 1917 to a Belgian refugee in Amsterdam / Netherlands. Transport by the Belgian steamer *Anversville (2)* to Bordeaux (arrival March 30th, 1917), then transported by train to Calais (PMB 5 - 4 April 1917 - from February 1917 the cancels with number have been collected in Calais except for the registered covers), then to Folkestone, and finally to destination via Vlissingen. The card was redirected to another street (Singel) in Amsterdam. (PMB = Poste Militaire Belge in French → Belgian Military Post).



The mark C.F. ("Censure Folkestone" in French → Folkestone Censorship) is applied on arrival in Folkestone. 49 is the number of the censor. Both were not applied by the same person with a very high probability. The correspondence was distributed on two different offices of censorship.



International postage rate for post card = 10c. (from April 1st, 1910)
Franked: postal stationary with view Stibbe #42 + 5c green Bilingual 1915 issue
The sender has pasted an half-card game "VALAIS" - not authorized for the postcard rate but tolerated or passed as such without taxation (as letter).

Postal stationery sent from Kikondja on December 27th, 1917 to Herstal in Occupied Belgium. Transit by Kambove on 14 January 1918 – Capetown route
Censor mark C.F. applied in red at Folkestone / UK in March 1918.
Both period of use in red ink: from 07/20/1916 to 07/30/1916 and from 03/01/1918 to 03/21/1918. (cfr A. Tassin).

Mail probably blocked until the end of the war.





Registered cover sent with AR from Irumu in November 1917 (no day) to an officer in Amersfoort where it arrived on 5 January 1918 via Bogoro on 20 November & the Calais Centralization Office on 15 December (PMB without number).

International postage rate (from April 1st, 1910): letter (25c) + registration (25c) + AR (25c)
The letter is overfranked at 85c by stamps of the Bilingual 1915 issue – 10c carmine (sky not re-entered) and 15c green plate III5+C1 dark centre - 5x
Note of value under each affixed stamps.
In red ink to prevent theft of stamp before arrival at the post office. (given at post office by a native - boy).
In addition it was only necessary to pay the registration and the AR for a letter to an internee (Hague Convention). This does not apply to heavy letters – supplementary steps of weights must be paid.

Censor tape « CENSURE MILITAIRE 10 » affixed at Folkestone. The tape numbers below 100 are all from Folkestone.

The « AR » (acknowledgment of receipt) is exceptional during the war.

Officers interned in Holland who had signed a declaration not to escape could live as civilians in a house of their choice, which explains the private address "Blankenheimstraat, 22"

The journey is also an assumption. Since there is a cancel of the Belgian military posts, the boat was directed towards Bordeaux, then to Calais probably by train. Then ALL THE MAIL TOWARDS HOLLAND WAS EXAMINED IN FOLKESTONE and put on a boat to Flushing or another port of Holland according to the available possibilities; the regular service between the UK and Flushing having been arrested during 1917 (global submarine warfare).

5. French censorship in London

In February 1916, the British censors proposed to divide the control of mails from the Americas, landed from neutral ships, but destined for neutral or southern Europe. One reason for this was that the French had better, or more, linguistic facilities. A conference of British and French censors was held in Paris where details of the scheme were agreed and in April 1916, one officer and 18 men opened the French "Commission Militaire de Contrôle Postal de Londres" (CMCP). Subsequently the staff grew to 50.

67. Division of censorship work with the French censorship.

In accordance with a scheme agreed upon at a Conference in Paris, in April, 1916, the following mails, carried by neutral ships which entered a port of the United Kingdom, were handed over to the French military authorities for examination :—

(1.) All mails to Switzerland.
*(2.) All mails from Switzerland. 63
(3.) All mails to Spain, Portugal and Greece.
*(4.) All mails from Spain, Portugal and Greece.

In addition to these, some or all of the following mails were from the autumn of 1916 passed to the French for censorship :—

(5.) Mails to Austria-Hungary and Bulgaria.
*(6.) Mails to South America.
*(7.) Mails from South America.

Of the above mails those marked with an asterisk(*) were handed to a French Commission stationed in London at the headquarters of the United Kingdom Censorship, except any addressed to Austria-Hungary or Bulgaria (whatever their origin), and those from Austria-Hungary or Bulgaria (whatever their destination); these were sent to France because the languages most commonly used in them could not be read by the French Commission.

The South American mails were too heavy for the United Kingdom Censorship to deal with entirely, and it was accordingly decided to transfer to the French authorities that part of these mails only which originated in, or was destined for, Austria-Hungary or Bulgaria, provided that the mail bags were marked as having that origin or destination, and were not enclosed in bags of other origin or destination as the case might be.

In addition to the above mails taken from neutral ships, all mails passing in ordinary transit through the United Kingdom from Spain and Portugal were handed to the French Commission in London.

Transit mails going in the reverse direction, viz., to Spain and Portugal were not received in the United Kingdom, nor were Greek closed mails in either direction.

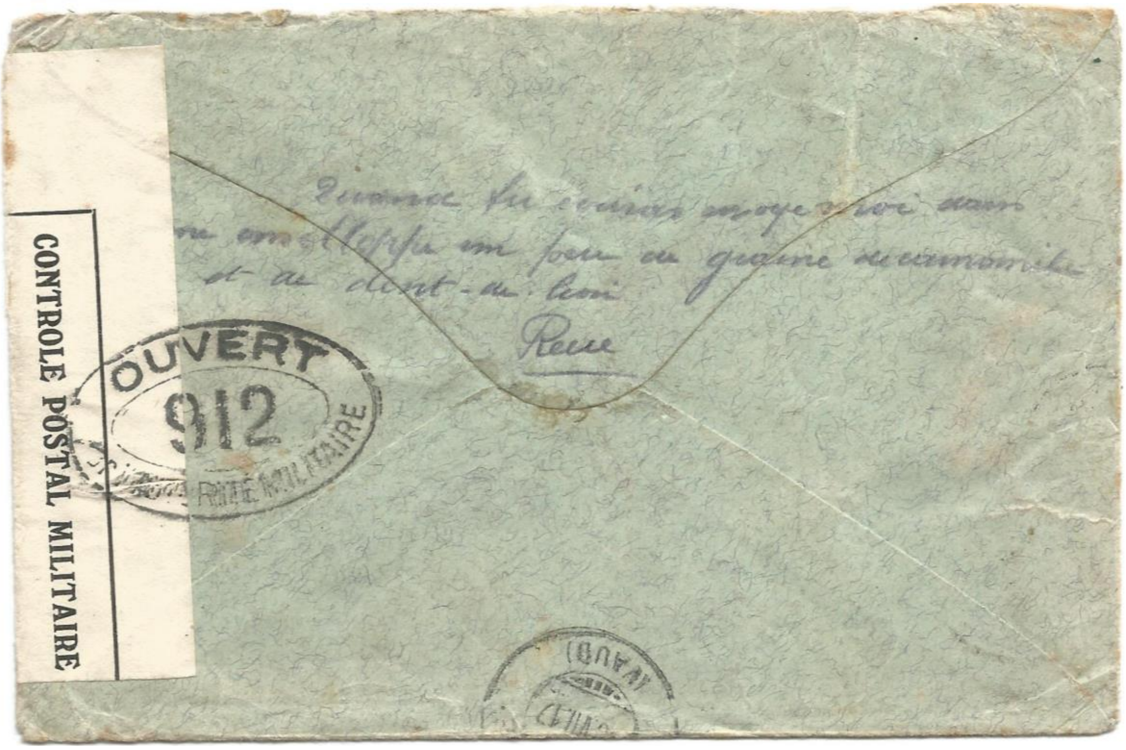
Extract from the official British history of postal censorship during WWI.

Mail handled by the French team in London can be recognised from the number in the OUVERT handstamp which was used to tie the re-closure label to the cover. Numbers 901 to 920 were allocated to London and these were the desk numbers. Additionally a small number was stamped on the cover, frequently at the lower right, which was the lecteur's personal number; of these 1 to 39 have been recorded, but a few within this range have not yet been seen.

Among the more 'exotic' origins and destinations recorded of mail examined by the French in London are: Belgian Congo, Liberia, Persia, Portuguese Guinea, Portuguese East Africa and Tonga and countries represented to date by single examples are Colombia, Falkland Islands, Guatemala, Japan and Romania.

Three covers with their letters have been recorded written from south-east Congo and sent in November 1916, March and May 1917.





From Belgian Congo, postmark not clear, paid 25c, to St George, Vaud, Switzerland.
French censorship in London, OUVERT 912, lecteur 27.
Incomplete arrival mark of July 1917.

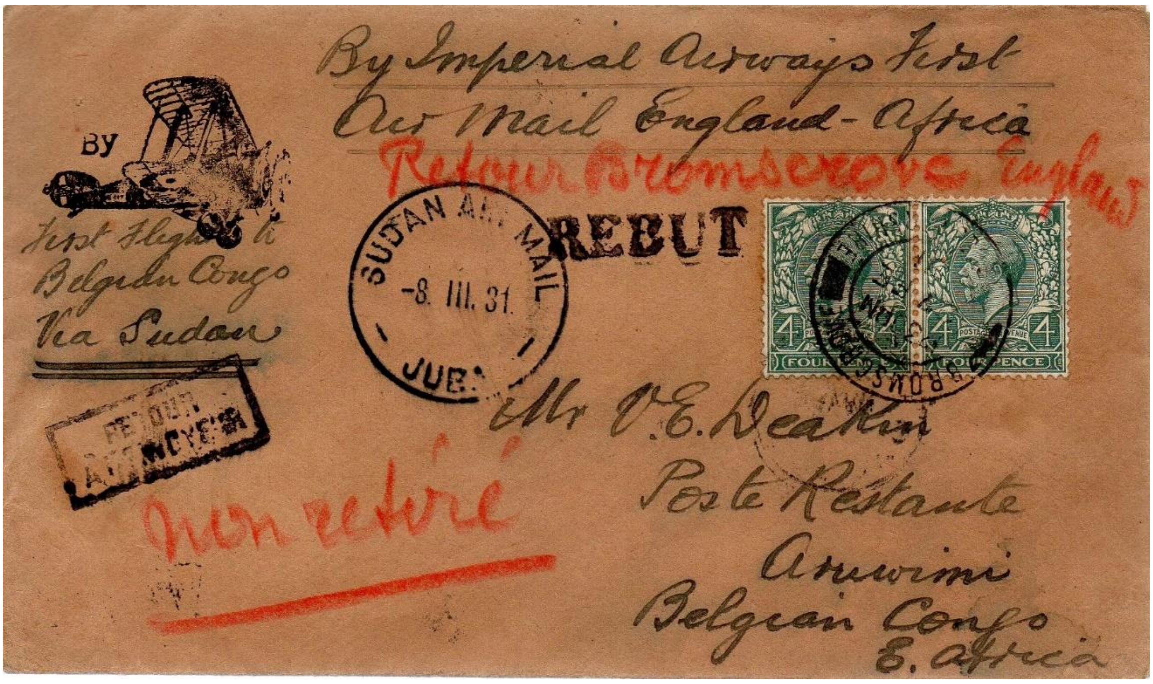
The enclosed 3 page letter was written on 21 May 1917, at Kasumbalesa (close to the border with British South Africa Company lands). In it René wrote that he had bought a young zebra and that there were plenty of oranges. He gave his postal address as “Box 134, Elville”.

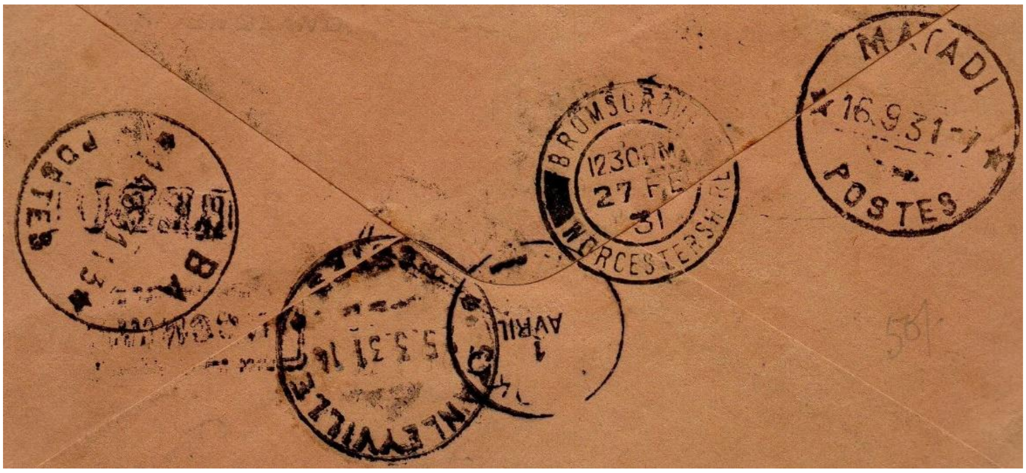
References:

Farquharson, LtCol ASL: *Report on Postal Censorship during the Great War (1914-1919)*, War Office, London (1920). National Archives ref. DEFE1/131
Bourguignat J: *Le Contrôle Postal et Télégraphique Français pendant la Première Guerre Mondiale*, Académie de Philatélie, Paris (2011) ISBN 9782952811545.

Airmail

1. Airmail from UK to Belgian Congo by Imperial Airways





Airmail cover sent from Bromscrove / Worcestershire / UK on 27 February 1931 to the post office of Aruwini / Belgian Congo with transit by Juba Sudan Airmail on 8 March, Aba on 14 March (on border of Congo / Sudan), Stanleyville on 25 March and Basoko on 1 April (old type 23mm cancel – very late use).

Belgian Congo marks for not delivered mail: “INCONNU” (Unknown) + “REBUT” + “RETOUR A L’ENVOYEUR” (return to sender).

Returned to UK by ship with transit by Matadi on 16 September 1931 (six months later).
This was the First Flight LONDON – MWANZA on 28 February 1931.

2. Airmail from Belgian Congo to UK by Imperial Airways



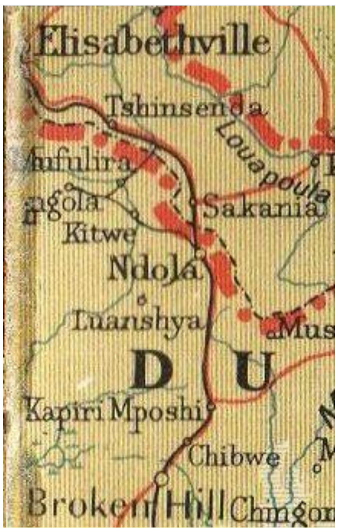




Airmail cover sent from Sakania / Katanga district on 3 May 1937 to Manchester / UK with transit by Ndola / Northern Rhodesia on 7 May and Broken Hill on 8 May; there it has taken a plane of the Imperial Airways (Capetown – London).

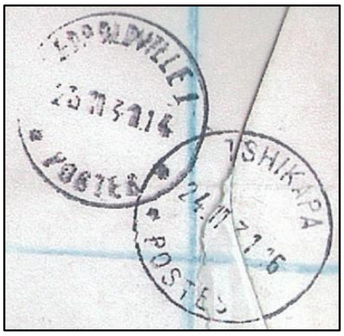
International postage rate (from Feb. 1st, 1934): letter (2.50 Fr / 20gr) + airmail surcharge (3.50 Fr / 5gr) – thus 9.50 Fr for a letter of 6-10 gr.

Franked by 50c & 2Fr – airmail postage 1921 issue + 3.50Fr / 3 Fr surcharged airmail postage 1936 issue



3. Airmail cover with mixed franking Angola/Belgian Congo to UK





The second domestic airmail line "Luebo – Tshikapa", with a length of 160 Km was in use on 14 December 1927 making a link between the border of Angola/ Congo and the Ocean.

A diamond deposit straddling the border was operated by the Forminière Co (near Tshikapa) in Congo and by the Diamang Co (near Dundo) in Angola. Most of the mails have been sent by the Angolan miners.

Those mails were franked by Angolan stamps with additional Belgian Congo airmail stamps. The Angolan stamps were cancelled by a linear datestamp and the Congo ones by the datestamp of Thsikapa.

Registered airmail cover sent from Dundo / Angola on 19 November 1931 to London EC2 / UK with transit by Tshikapa on 24 November and Leopoldville on the next day.

Angolan registered mark in red ink "REGISTO – DUNDO" recorded by nr 2131.

Belgian Congo framed linear mark "AVION" applied at Tshikapa.

International postage rate of 3.05 Escudo for a registered letter weighting 21 to 40 gr + 3 Fr for airmail surcharge in Congo (1.50 Fr / 20 gr), franked by 1F & 2F airmail 1921 issue.

4. Mark « PAR AVION / DE ……….. / A……….. » (BY AIR / FROM ………../ TO ……….)

This Congolese postal mark seems to appear around 1938 and is used by the Belgian Postoffice until the independence of 1960. It will be replaced around 1953 by a bilingual framed mark (French - Dutch).

« PAR AVION DE _______ A________ / PER VLIEGTUIG VAN ______ TOT ____ ».

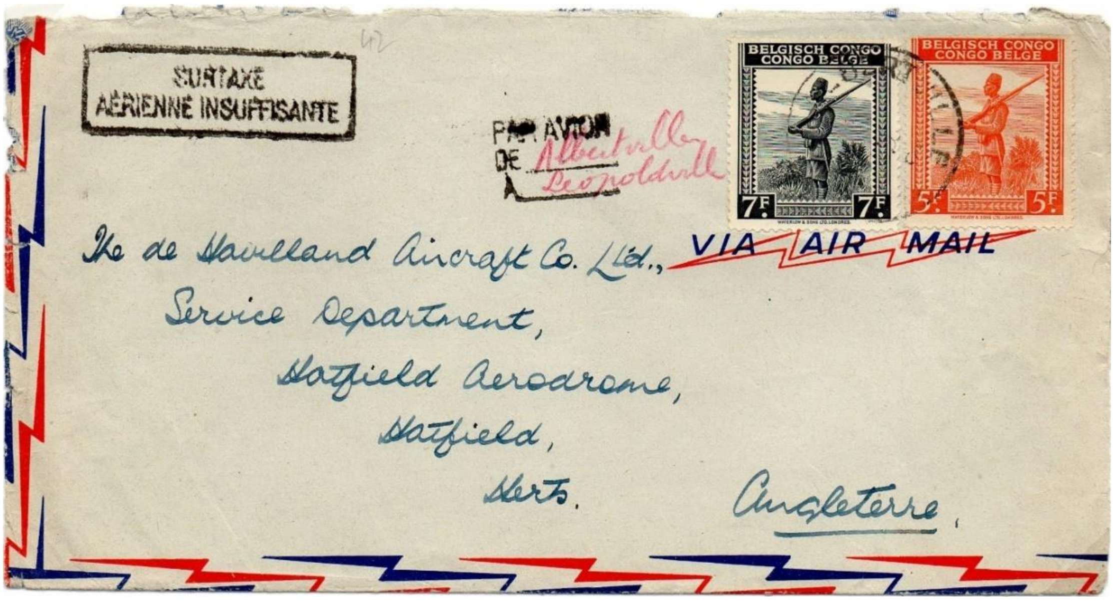




This mark is encountered on covers (letters, postcards, postal stationeries, ...) by airmail whose the air surcharge is either insufficient or calculated for a partial plane trip.
In the first case, it will meet with the Congolese framed mark « SURTAXE AERIENNE INSUFFISANTE » next bilingual « SURTAXE AERIENNE INSUFFISANTE / BIJTAKS VOOR LUCHTPOST ONTOEREIKEND » (insufficient air surcharge).

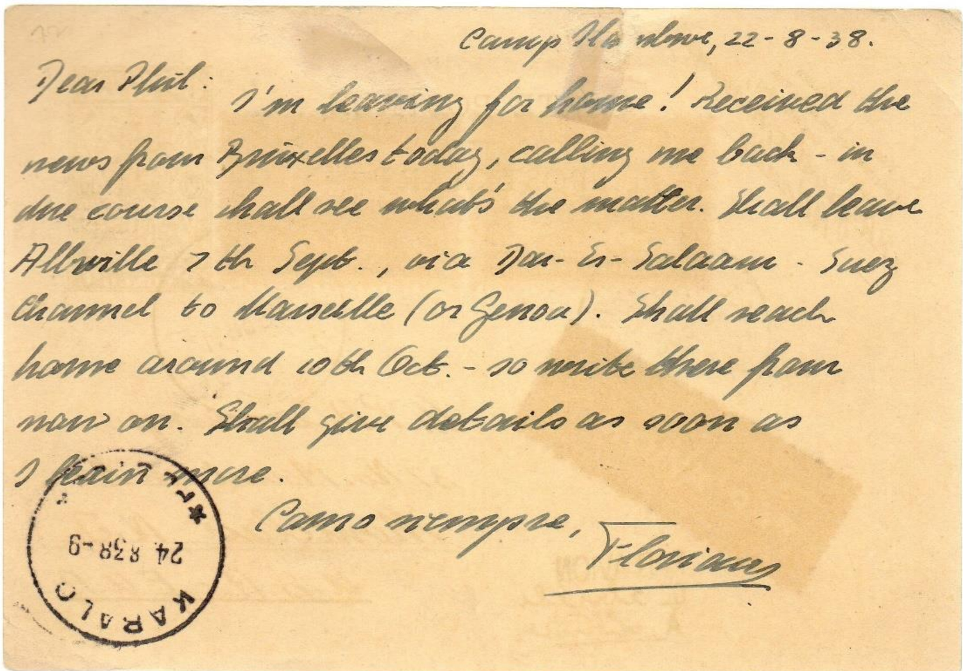


The part of the mark « DE _____ / A _______ » will be completed for the greatest possible distance by air, according to the postage affixed on the cover.



Cover sent from Albertville on July 5th, 1948 to "The Havilland Aircraft Co / Service Department / Hatfield Aerodrome / Hatfield - Herts / UK". International postage rate (01.01.42 = 3.50 Fr) + airmail shipping to Europe (15.12.47 - 2x 4.50 Fr – letter of 6-10gr) = 12.50 Fr.
Franked at 12 Fr – deficiency = 50c.
Framed mark « SURTAXE AERIENNE INSUFFISANTE »
Mark « PAR AVION DE Albertville A Léopoldville » - use of airmail only in domestic service – airmail in free domestic shipping for letter & postcard since December 1st, 1940.





Postal stationery sent from Albertville on 23 August 1938 to Montclair / New Jersey / USA via Kabalo on 24 August.

The sender thought that his card would leave on the British line and had paid 6.10 Fr (1.25 Fr + 4.75 Fr / 5 gr of Airmail shipping = 6.00 Fr) but the postman decided to send it by the French line of AIR AFRICA, departure from Elisabethville on 26 August with arrival in Paris on 31 August. It is for this reason that we find on the verso the transit stamp of KABALO the 24-8-38. The mark PAR AVION d'Albertville A Londres was probably applied at Albertville.

Blue postal label « PAR AVION » (misplaced perforation, on the white frame).

WW II

1. PC66 / PC 90 – Censor labels

The PC66 labels OPENED BY CENSOR were used in the early period of WWII. We have recorded them in general use until June 1940 with a few used later in certain sections where their stock of labels lasted a little longer.
The PC90 OPENED BY EXAMINER came into use in May 1940 following the transfer of the responsibility for the censorship from the War Office to the Ministry of Information.
There are many different typefaces used on these labels, no doubt due to more than a dozen different printers being used during the war. A number of British Empire censorships also used the PC90 form number.

Postal history





Airmail cover sent from Elisabethville on 26 April 1940 to London / UK.

International postage rate: letter (2.50 Fr / 20 gr) + airmail surcharge (3.50 Fr / 5 gr)
Franked by 50c, 1.50 Fr & 4 Fr – natives, animals and landscape issue (1931)

Censor label “OPENED BY CENSOR 3167 / PC66” affixed at London at arrival.

Cover sent from Busu-Djanoa (scarce cancel) on 17 July 1942 to Birmingham / UK with transit by Lisala on 19 July and Leopoldville on 7 August.
International postage rate (from 01.01.42): letter at 3.50 Fr
Franked by 1 Fr - Natives, animals & landscape issue (1931) + 2.50 Fr - Monument of King Albert 1st at Leopoldville issue (1941)

Censor tape "CENSURE CONGO BELGE" type Aa applied at Leopoldville 1 by censor number 20.
Censor label "OPENED BY EXAMINER 5247 – PC90" (form "51-9912-G.W.D.") the small printing on the Opened by Examiner label was the printer's contract or order number. Each printer had their own style of showing their imprint – some included the quantity printed and the date (month and year), others like this just their initials and the order number. Unfortunately we have not been able to identify most of the printers of these labels.





Cover sent from Maritime Mail post Office to Albertville / Congo where it arrived on 2 September 1944 with transit by Usumbura / Ruanda-Urundi (also a Belgian Colony) on 26 August.

Censor label "Opened by censor" – Army Form W.3424 applied at departure

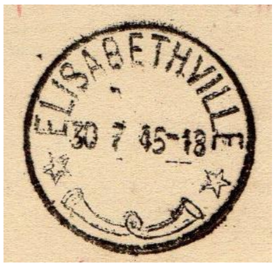
Censor label "OPENED BY EXAMINER 528 – PC90" applied in transit.

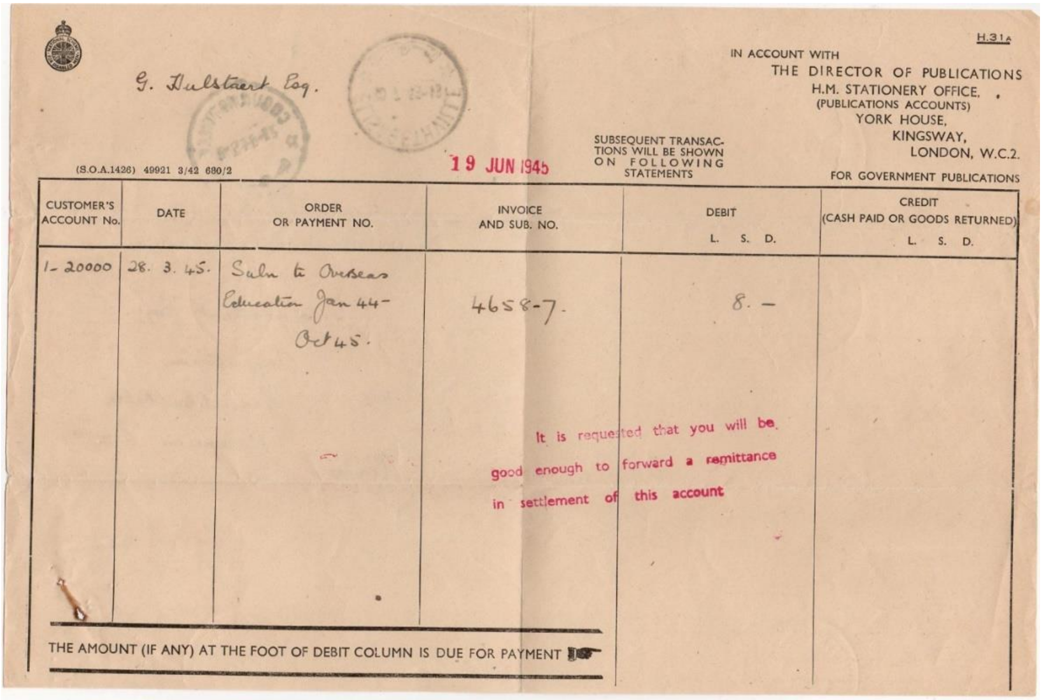


2. S.E. xxx – Censor mark (UK)









H.31A

G. Hulstaert Esq.

IN ACCOUNT WITH
THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLICATIONS
H.M. STATIONERY OFFICE,
(PUBLICATIONS ACCOUNTS)
YORK HOUSE,
KINGSWAY,
LONDON, W.C.2.

(S.O.A.1426) 49921 3/42 680/2

19 JUN 1945

SUBSEQUENT TRANSACTIONS WILL BE SHOWN ON FOLLOWING STATEMENTS

FOR GOVERNMENT PUBLICATIONS

CUSTOMER'S ACCOUNT No.	DATE	ORDER OR PAYMENT NO.	INVOICE AND SUB. NO.	DEBIT L. S. D.	CREDIT (CASH PAID OR GOODS RETURNED) L. S. D.
1-20000	28. 3. 45.	Subn to Overseas Education Jan 44 - Oct 45.	4658-7.	8. –	

It is requested that you will be good enough to forward a remittance in settlement of this account

THE AMOUNT (IF ANY) AT THE FOOT OF DEBIT COLUMN IS DUE FOR PAYMENT

Folded letter (ON HIS MAJESTY'S SERVICE header) sent from London 20 June 1945 to Aequatoria / Coquilhatville / Belgian Congo where it arrived on August 21th, with transit by Elisabethville on July 30th.

Purple censor "PASSED S.E.1" with number "703".

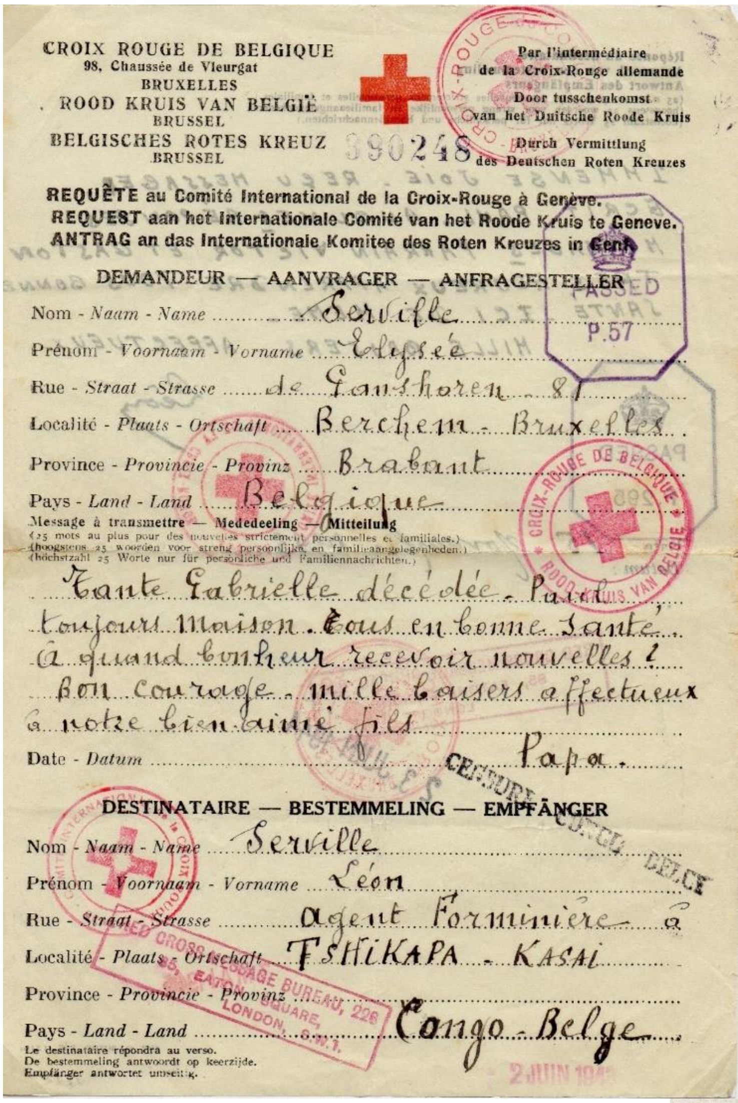
Comments by Graham MARK: the hand-stamped marking PASSED S.E.1 is very unusual. I believe SE = Special Examiners who dealt with sensitive mails of "White Lists", political and religious refugees, foreign government material, pacifist etc. We have recorded these hand-stamps with numbers up to 8. The 703 may, or may not be, related to the SE1 handstamp. If it is a censor's number it is one we have recorded working in London, where the Special Examiners were operating.

The inside of the folded letter form with SE1 censor mark looks very innocuous and not appearing to need a Special Examiner, who would have been vetted by the Security staff, probably on at least an annual basis, as they normally dealt with sensitive material.

A further thought on the censorship – as this was from the Stationery Office, a Government organisation, maybe all their mail was passed to the Special Examiners, because some might be sensitive but that would not be apparent from the outside. Alternatively this item might have got into a bundle of other material and as it was so innocuous there was no point in sending it elsewhere for examination. All speculation.

As far as we know from other Special Examiners censored items, it was procedure that all mail to/from government organisations was already separated by the Mail Sorters and then forwarded to the Special Examiners. (cfr Konrad Morenweiser)

3. Red Cross Message with UK transit



CROIX ROUGE DE BELGIQUE
98, Chaussée de Vleurgat
BRUXELLES
ROOD KRUIS VAN BELGIË
BRUSSEL
BELGISCHES ROTES KREUZ
BRUSSEL

390248

Par l'intermédiaire de la Croix-Rouge allemande
Door tusschenkomst van het Duitsche Roode Kruis
Durch Vermittlung des Deutschen Roten Kreuzes

REQUÊTE au Comité International de la Croix-Rouge à Genève.
REQUEST aan het Internationale Comité van het Roode Kruis te Geneve.
ANTRAG an das Internationale Komitee des Roten Kreuzes in Genf.

DEMANDEUR — AANVRAGER — ANFRAGESTELLER

Nom - Naam - Name: Serville
Prénom - Voornaam - Vorname: Elysée
Rue - Straat - Strasse: de Ganshoren 81
Localité - Plaats - Ortschaft: Berchem - Bruxelles
Province - Provincie - Provinz: Brabant
Pays - Land - Land: Belgique

Message à transmettre — Mededeeling — Mitteilung
(25 mots au plus pour des nouvelles strictement personnelles et familiales.)
(hoogstens 25 woorden voor streng persoonlijke en familieaangelegenheden.)
(höchstzahl 25 Worte nur für persönliche und Familiennachrichten.)

Tante Gabrielle décédée. Paul toujours maison. Tous en bonne santé. A quand bonheur recevoir nouvelles? Bon courage mille baisers affectueux à notre bien aimé fils

Date - Datum: Papa.

PASSED P.57

CENSURE CONGO BELGE

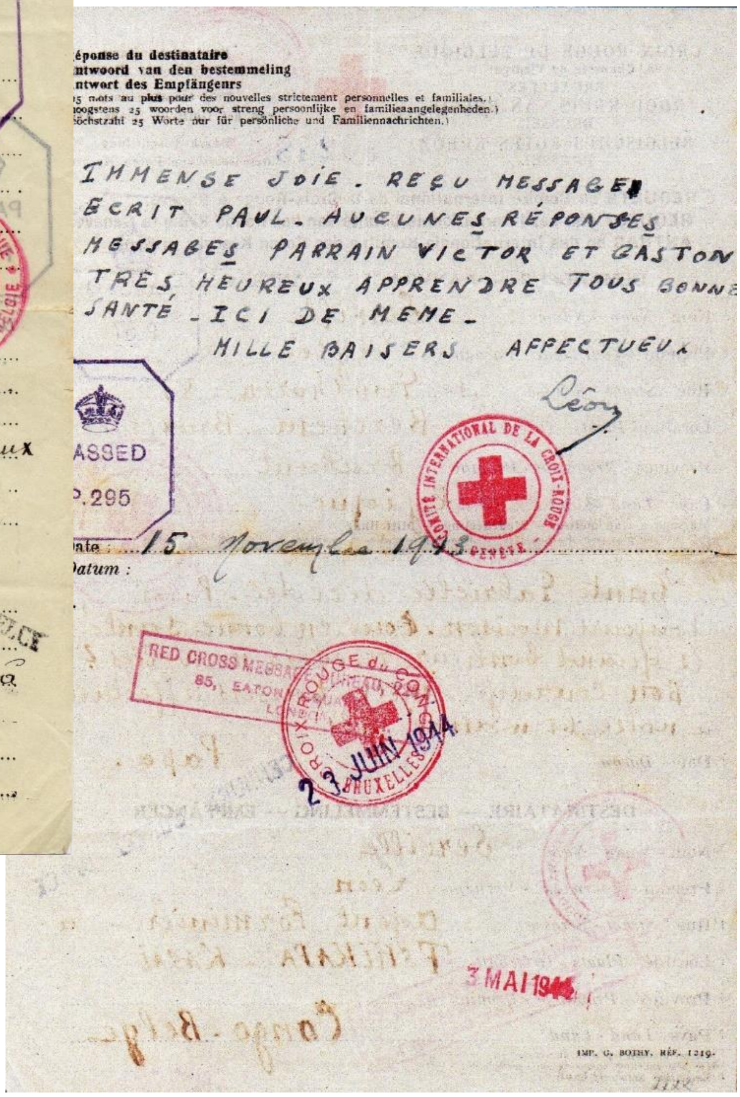
DESTINATAIRE — BESTEMMELING — EMPFÄNGER

Nom - Naam - Name: Serville
Prénom - Voornaam - Vorname: Léon
Rue - Straat - Strasse: Agent Forminière à
Localité - Plaats - Ortschaft: TSHIKAPA - KASAI
Province - Provincie - Provinz:
Pays - Land - Land: Congo Belge

Le destinataire répondra au verso.
De bestemmeling antwoordt op keerzijde.
Empfänger antwortet umseitig.

RED CROSS MESSAGE BUREAU, 226 EATON SQUARE, LONDON, S.W.1.

2 JUIN 194



Réponse du destinataire
Antwoord van den bestemmeling
Antwort des Empfängers
(25 mots au plus pour des nouvelles strictement personnelles et familiales.)
(hoogstens 25 woorden voor streng persoonlijke en familieaangelegenheden.)
(Höchstzahl 25 Worte nur für persönliche und Familiennachrichten.)

IMMENSE JOIE. REÇU MESSAGE. ÉCRIT PAUL. AUCUNES RÉPONSES MESSAGES. PARRAIN VICTOR ET GASTON TRÈS HEUREUX APPRENDRE TOUS BONNE SANTÉ. ICI DE MÊME. MILLE BAISERS AFFECTUEUX

Léon

PASSED P.295

Comité International de la Croix-Rouge

Date: 15 Novembre 1943

RED CROSS MESSAGE BUREAU, 85, EATON ... LONDON

Croix-Rouge de Congo ... Bruxelles 23 JUIN 1944

3 MAI 1944

Demand form
Belgian Red Cross message sent from Brussels to Tshikapa / Belgian Congo.Transit by RX of Belgium, RX of Geneve (Switzerland), RX of London – violet censor "PASSED P.57" (P = Private) + Linear censor mark at arrival "CENSURE CONGO BELGE" (Belgian Congo Censored).

Reply form.
RX message sent from Thsikapa on 15 November 1943 to Brussels where it arrived on 23 June 1944 with transit by RX of Congo, RX of Geneve, RX of London, and RX of Brussels. Violet censor "PASSED P.295"



Comments about RX of London:

1. Red Cross Message Bureau No 226 - Not seen this bureau on C.I . messages. However there was a Red Cross Message Bureau in every town in England. The highest bureau number I have seen is 875.

2. The cachet of the REd Cross Message Bureau in England was always applied to the Red Cross message form prior to leaving the Bureau.

3. Message would then be censored in England receiving an octagonal censor handstamp. (crown/ PASSED/ P. 57) P means private. Occasionally this was replaced by the letter 'T' meaning trade.

4. This message would then be transferred to Geneva where again it was censored and received the small double circle CIRC handstamp in red.

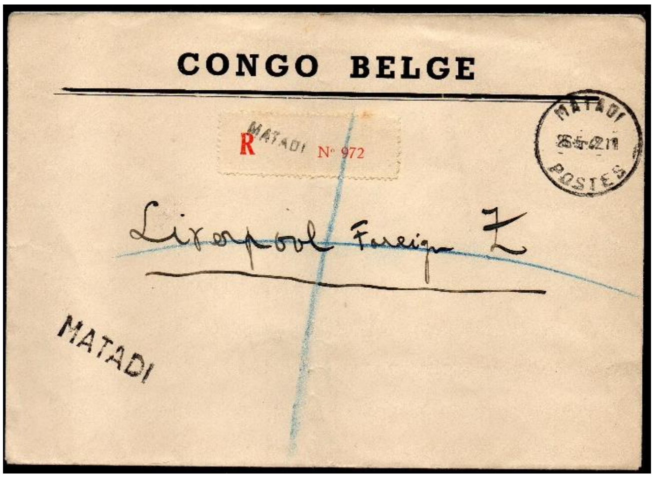
5. Message would then be forwarded to its destination.

6. If the destination was England (from the Channel Islands) it would be just routed to the specified Red Cross Message Bureau but the Bureau would NOT place their handstamp on arriving messages.

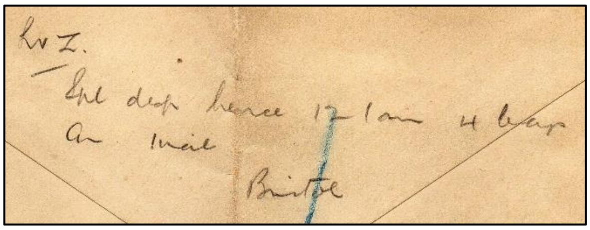
7. This message obviously travelled from Brussels to Belgian Congo because it has received a BELGIAN CONGO CENSOR mark.

8. However it appears that the reply on the reverse was sent from the Message bureau in London (different British censor number) and not Belgian Congo.

4. Liverpool Foreign Z



Registered official cover sent from Matadi on May 26th, 1942 to Liverpool Foreign Z.
Small linear mark MATADI on registration label.
High linear mark MATADI applied at botton left corner – this letter was, thus most probably, sent by Matadi post office.
Note on the back (black pencil) was written in Bristol, to Lv Z (Liverpool Z) stating how many bags were to be despatched (presumably bags of mail?).



"Liverpool Z" in WWII was connected with the censorship because instructions have been seen to send items for censorship to that Post Office.

PO Circular 20 Sept 39 and a supplement thereto included instructions on the despatch of printed paper packets and for parcels, sample packets and insured boxes.
The supplement explained the system, where to apply for permits, and how the bags of such matter should be handled by the Post Office. This last section told the PO staff that the bags containing such packets had to sent to Liverpool Foreign Z.

In a supplement to a later Circular 10 July 40 the office is referred to simply as "Liverpool Z"
We have seen parcel tags from diplomatic bags ex Whitehall to British Embassies with printed Liverool Z as the despatching office.
The "Z" suffix was also used in London for some purpose but that we only know from a rectangular datestamp/postmark – no idea of the office function (cfr Graham MARK).

5. Aigraph service

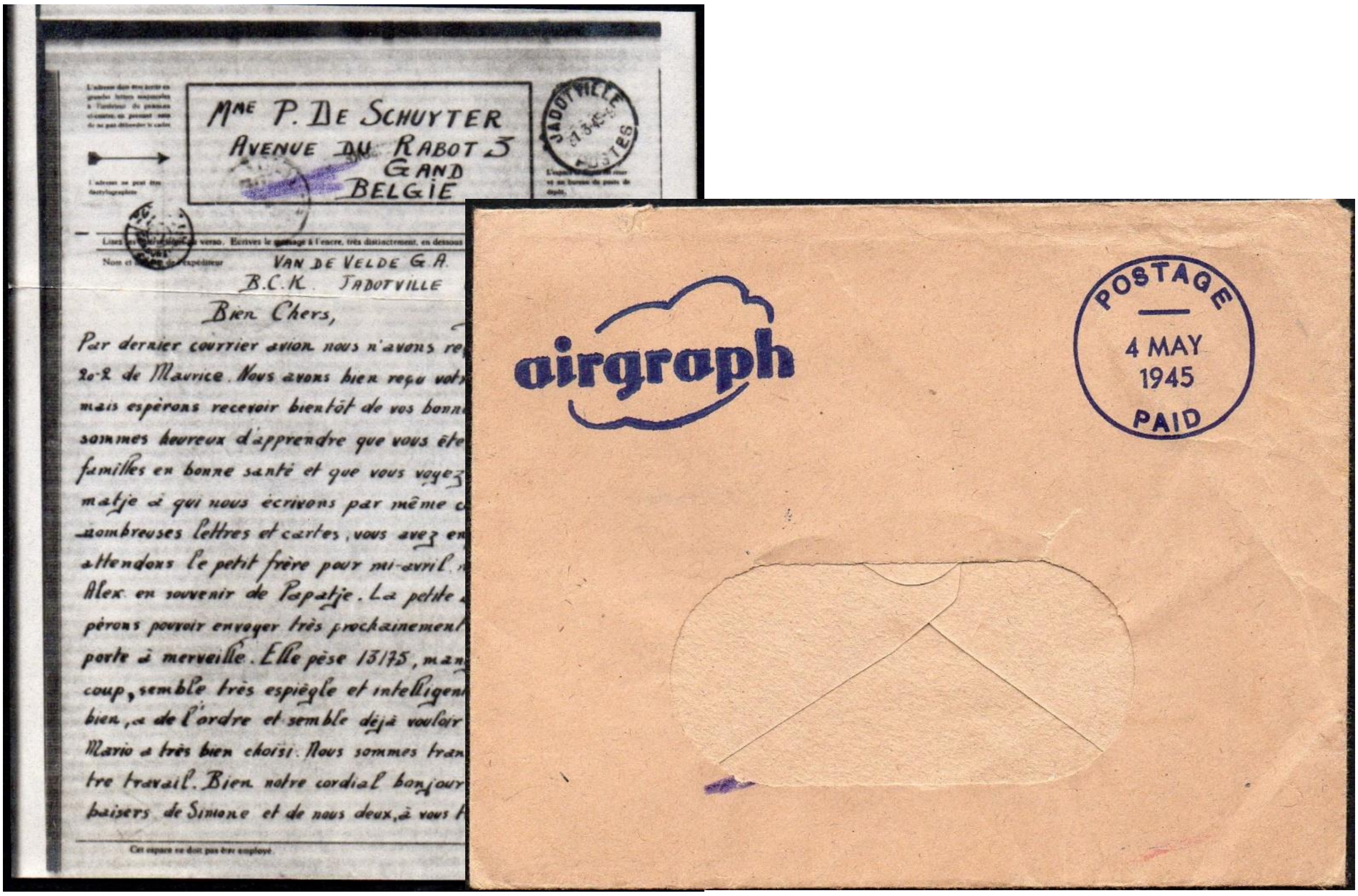
Foreword:

The purpose of the Airgraph service was to reduce the volume of mail and reduce the travel time of mail between two countries. Airgraphs going to or coming from the Belgian Congo are extremely rare items.

Travel:

The letters were written on special 28cm x 21.5cm forms. These forms were sent to Stanleyville and then sent to Cairo, Egypt. They were then photographed onto microfilm. The microfilms were then transported by air to England, where they were developed onto paper in a format smaller than the original size (14cm x 10.75cm) and placed in envelopes with "AIRGRAPH" headers. The letters were then put into the postal service. This service was accessible to all types of organizations (military, civil, commercial companies etc). The rate was 6fr. which had to be paid for with postage stamps placed on the back of the form and deposited at the post office. The sender was asked not to use small handwriting and write the address in large capital letters. The service begins in 1944.

Aigraph from Belgian Congo to Belgium via UK



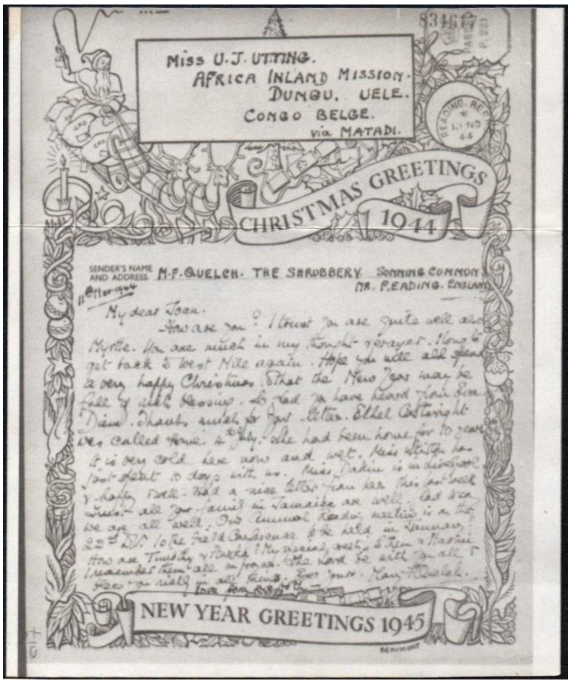
Airgraph (No. 173940) accepted in Jadotville for Belgium on 31 March 1945.

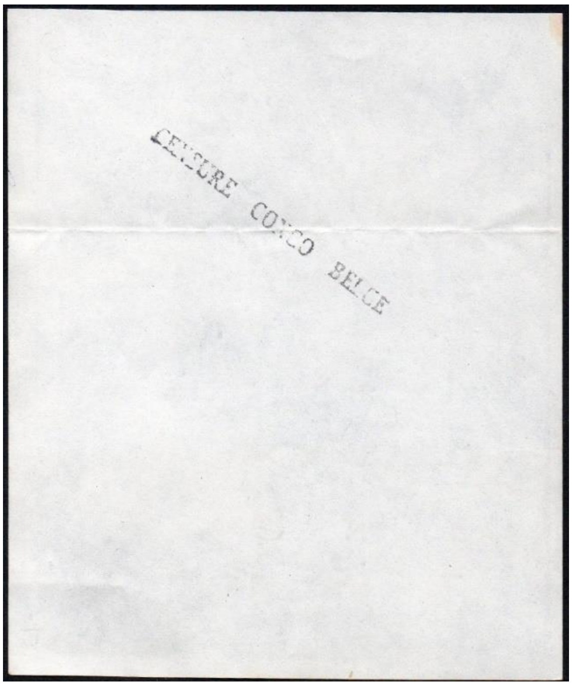
After acceptance, the form was sent to Cairo for processing on microfilm. Then it was transported to England, where it was put into an airgraph window-envelope and cancelled “Postage Paid - 4 May 1945" and transmitted to Belgium.

Straightline Congolese censor’s postmark "CENSURE CONGO BELGE” and Egyptian cancel "Censorship Dept 5 ".

Airgraph from UK to Belgian Congo

Airgraph (No. 834617) Illustrated form for Christmas 1944 and New Year 1945, accepted in Reading on 13 November 1944 for Dungu, Belgian Congo. British Censor "PASSED P.221" and Congolese censorship on arrival on the back "CENSURE CONGO BELGE" Type Baa.





6. Letter to Mrs Churchill



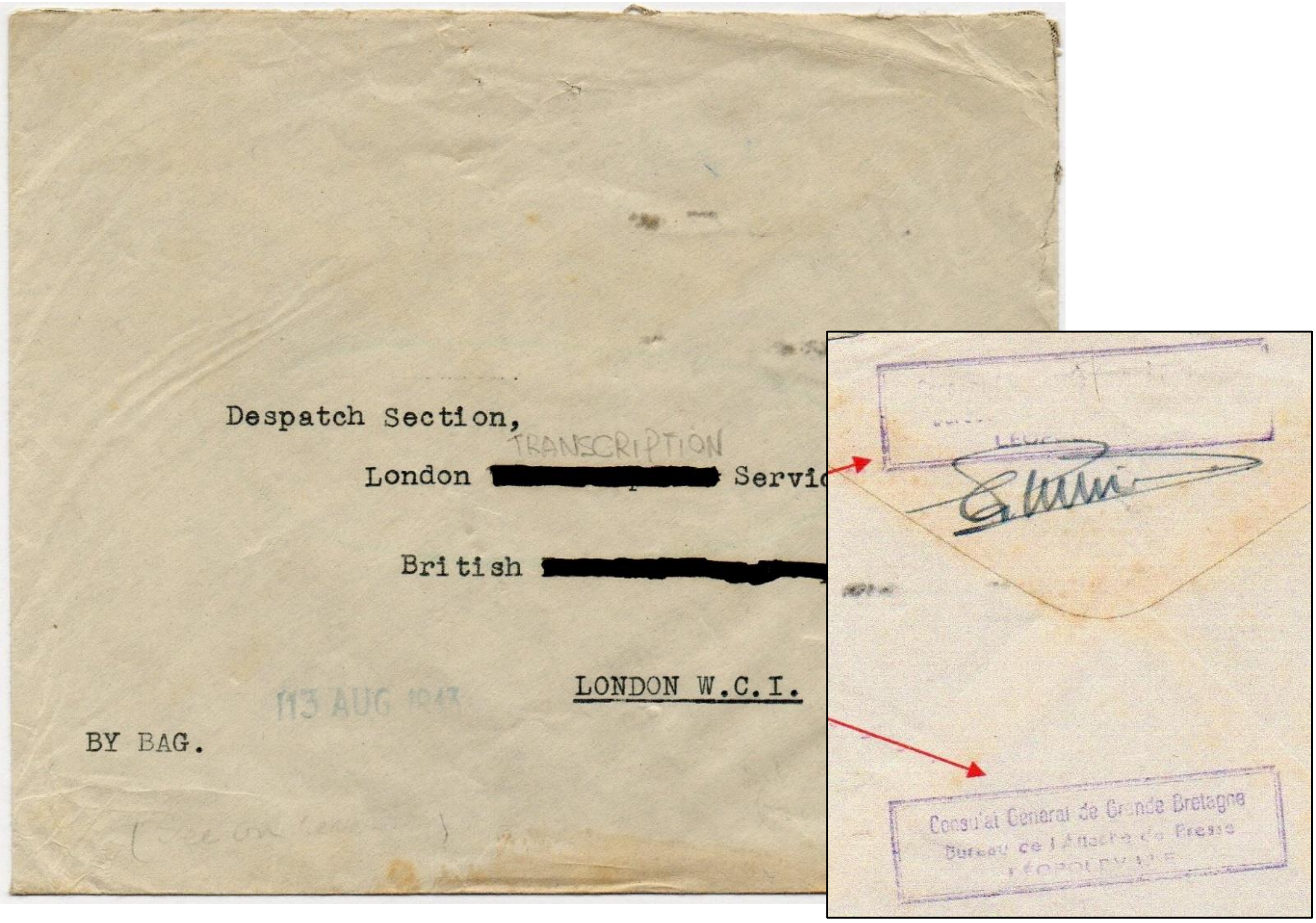
Registered surface mail written by "Les amis de la Croix-Rouge Russe" "the friends of the russian Red-Cross" sent from Elisabethville on 19 May 1943 to Mrs Clementine Churchill Chairman for the Medical help for the Russia at London/UK.

Clementine Churchill was born Clementine Hozier on 1 April 1885. She married Winston Churchill at St Margaret's Church, Westminster on 12 September 1908. She had five children.
During WW1 Clementine organized canteens for munitions workers on behalf of the YMCA in north east London for which she became a C.B.E. in 1918 (Commander of The Order of The British Empire)
During WW2 she became Chairman of The Red Cross Aid to Russia fund.

From the outbreak of war on the Eastern front, Britain showed great support for Russia. In October 1941 Clementine Churchill launched a campaign under the auspices of the Red Cross to raise funds for the supply of medical aid and clothing to Russia. She became the Chairman of this Fund. There was an immediate response - £370,00 being raised within the first 12 days in operation. By December 1941, £1 million pounds had been raised. Donations arrived from all parts of the British Empire. By the end of the war, over £7 million pounds had been raised.

In 1946, she became Dame Clementine Churchill. After the death of Sir Winston Churchill in 1965, she was created a peer, taking on the title – Baroness Spencer-Churchill. She died in December 1977 at the age of 92.

7. Mail by British bag.



Cover written at « Consulat Général de Grande-Bretagne – Bureau de l'attaché de presse - LEOPOLDVILLE» (violet framed mark on reverse + signature - English translation : « General Consulate of Great-Britain – office of Press Officer – LEOPOLDVILLE ») to Despatch Section / London Transcription Service / Mondon W.C.I.

Carried by diplomatic bag (typewritten "BY BAG" on front) to London where it arrived at destination on 13 AUG 1943 (linear datestamp in blue ink on front).

8. Mac Kenzie military mission

In July 1940 the British Government sent the Mac Kenzie Commission to the Belgian Congo with the task of evaluating, the potential and the possibilities of a cooperation between the "Force Publique (Belgian Congo Army) and the Allied.
Before sending this mission, the British had considered the occupation of some points in the Belgian Congo.

Led by Colonel Mac Kenzie, a former British military official in Brussels, the commission travelled all over Congo to assess its military and economic potential.
Captain Fitch was on this commission and was accompanied by his wife.



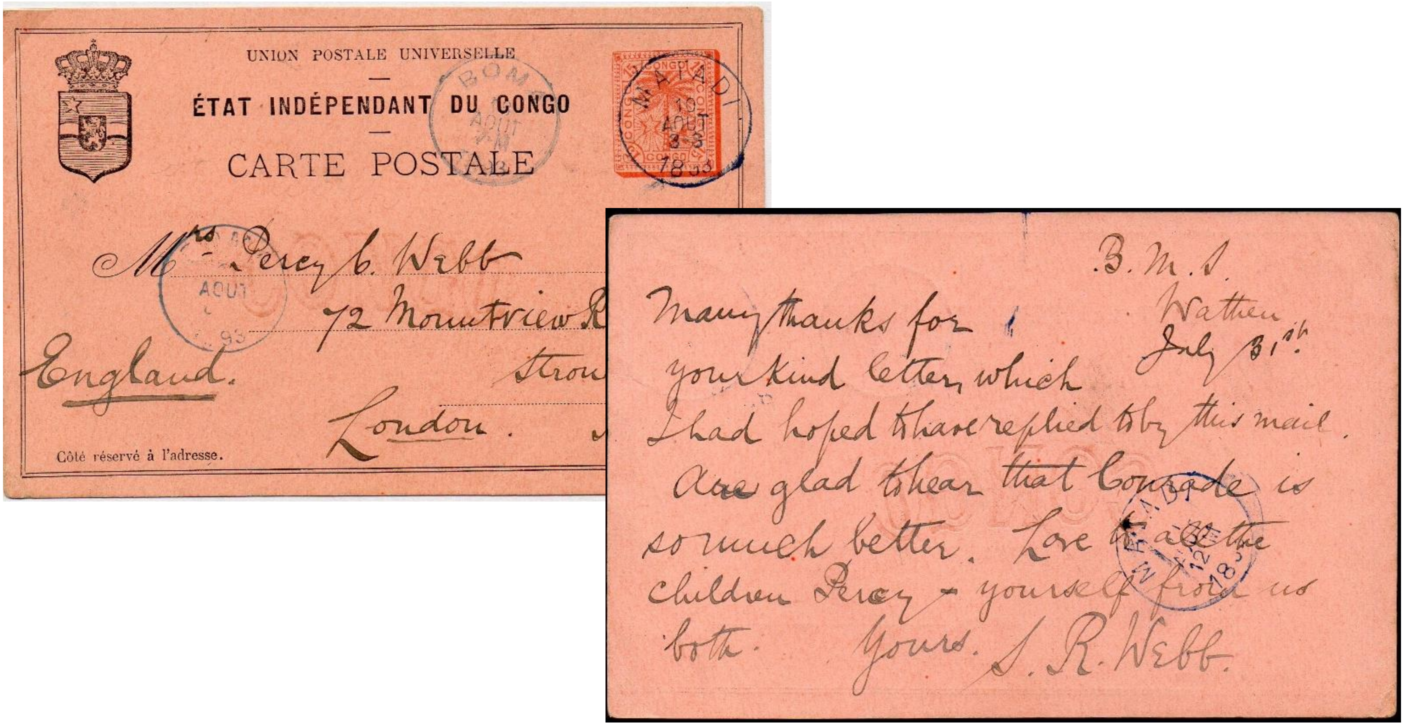
Cover send by the Service of Transport / Colony / district of Stanleyville on 30 May 1941 to the Mac Kenzie Military Mission at Bunia where it arrived on 8 June.
Official mail – postage free.



Cover sent by Captain Marc FITCH / Mc Kenzie Military Mission (see handwritten note +signature at bottom left corner) at Bunia on 4 April 1941 to his wife at Stanleyville where it arrived on 6 April with transit by Irumu on 5 April.
Domestic postage rate (from Dec. 1st, 1940) : letter at 2.50 Fr / 20 gms
Franked by 75c + 1.75 Fr – Monument of King Albert 1st at Leopoldville – 1941 issue.

Baptist Missionary Society (B.M.S.)

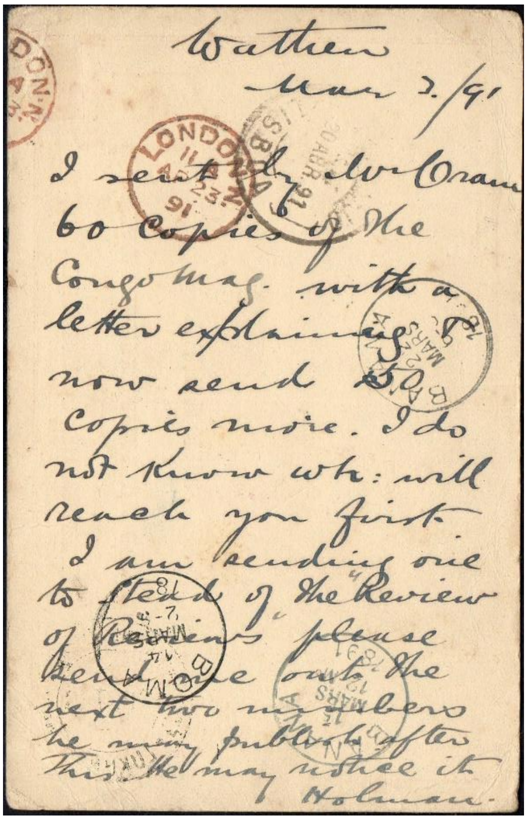
Founded by Baptists in Kettering, Northamptonshire, England in 1792. It now supports 350 workers in 40 Countries. The first Protestant missionary to arrive in the Belgian Congo was in 1878. Its work includes development of the church, disaster relief, education, health, and media. The Congo-Balolo Mission was a British Baptist Missionary Society that was active in the Congo from 1889 to 1915, - the first volunteers from England reaching Matadi in August 1889. By 1891, missionary stations had been established at Bonginda, Lulonga, Ikau, Bongandanga, …

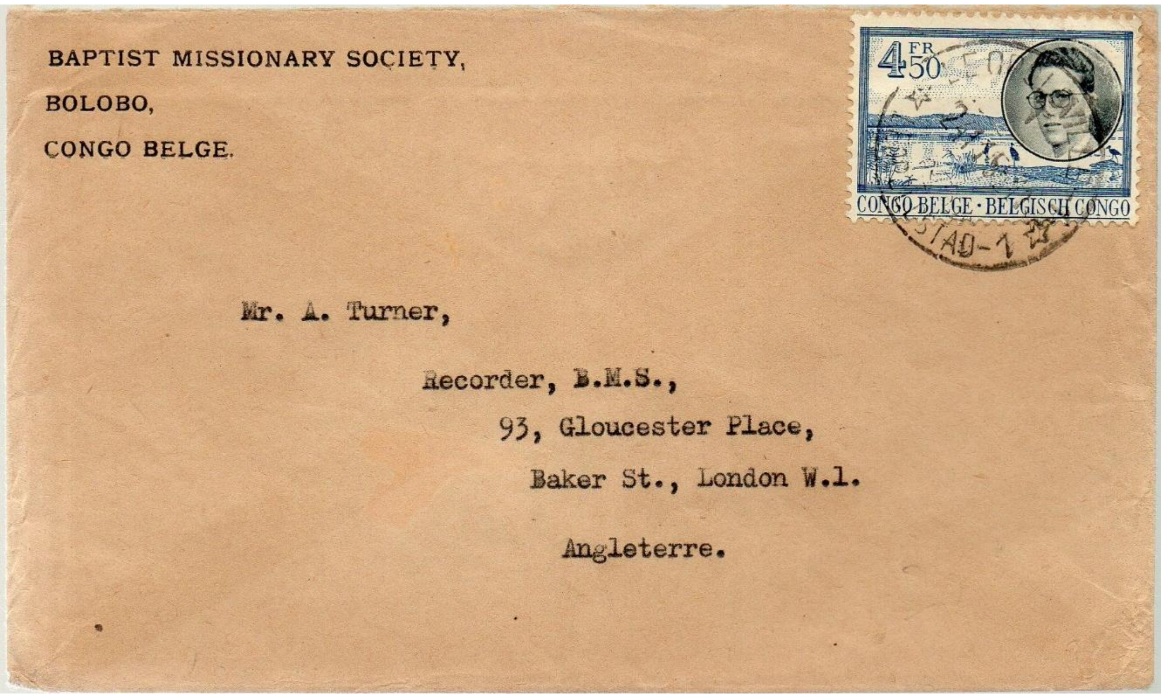


Postal stationery (Stibbe n°3) written in Wathen B.M.S. to London. Transit by Matadi on 24 August 1893 and Boma on 16 August 1893.



Postal stationery (Stibbe n°5) written in Wathen B.M.S. on 3 March 1891 to London where it arrived on 23 April 1891. Transit by Boma on 14 March, Banana on 15 March and Lisboa/Portugal on 20 april 1891.





Cover with B.M.S. header written by a member of the B.M.S. at Bolobo, sent from Leopoldville-1 on 24 November 1955 to BMS Recorder at London/UK.



Cover with a header (Baptist Missionary Society secretariat du Congo Léopoldville-Est – Congo Belge) sent from Leopoldville to de Baptist Missionary Society at London/UK.





Cover sent from Aylsham/Norfolk/UK on 15 January 1898 to de B.M.S. of Lukolela/ Uper Congo. It was routed by railway from Matadi to Tumba. Transit "TUMBA POSTE" (railway cachet) and Lukungu on 15 February 1898.





Cover sent from Tooting/UK on 24 January 1930 to the B.M.S. of Bolobo where it arrived on 16 February 1930. Transit Léopoldville 1 on 15 February 1930.

Red meter marks

Various machine types were used in the Belgian Congo from 1929:
Timbregraphe machines (license A), Hasler F88 (license B), Francotyp (license F), Satas (license N), Universal (license U).

Unlike European countries, less than 100 companies or banks used these machines between 1929 and 1960 (year of independence). Mails from Belgian Congo with this type of postage are therefore considered as rare.





Ch. Le Jeune (Assurances)
S.C.R.L.
LEOPOLDVILLE

S.C.R.L. = Sociétés Coopératives à Responsabilité Limités (Limited Liability Cooperatives).
Machine Satas (License N) – N 151.

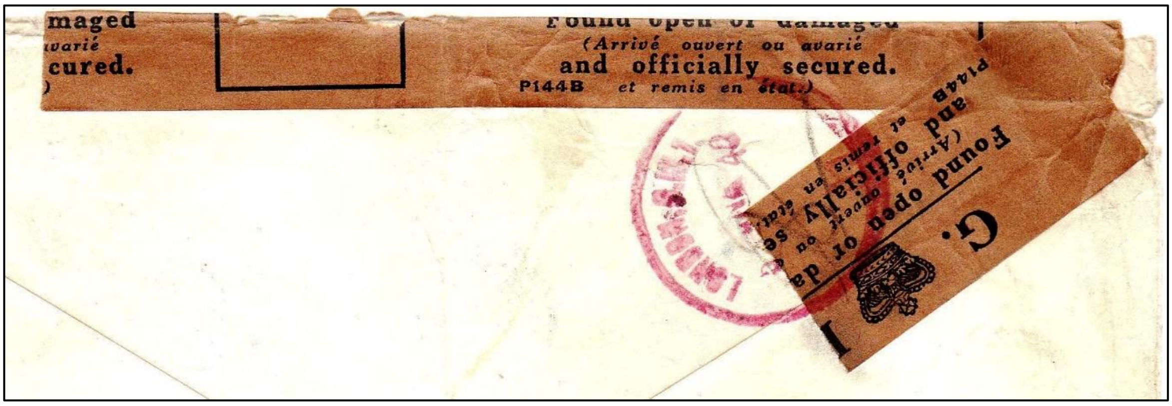
Cover sent by airmail from Leopoldville on 16 December 1953 to Haywards Heath / Sussex / UK.

Postage rate: international letter (01/07/53) at 4.50 Fr / 20 gr + airmail rate (01/07/53) to Europe at 3 Fr / 5 gr – thus a total of 7.50 Fr for a letter with a weight less than 5 gr.

Franked at 6.50 Fr with strike N151 with advertising flame supplemented with a second strike N151 at 1 Fr, without the flame to rectify the initial erroneous franking - probably realized by interposition of a piece of paper at the place of the flame. Rare set of 2 distinct red meter marks.

UK Sealing Labels





Airmail cover sent from Elisabethville on 24 May 1940 to His Excellency The Ambassador of Belgium at London / UK. The cover was carried to Broken Hill for taking a plane of the Imperial Airways line (Capetown – London).

International postage rate: (from Feb 1st, 1934): letter (2.50 Fr / 20 gr + 1.50 Fr / 20 gr suppl.) + airmail surcharge (3.50 Fr / 5gr) – thus 68 Fr for a letter weighing 81 to 85 gr.

Correct franking by 1Fr & 2.50 Fr natives, animals and landscapes issue (1931) + 15 Fr – vertical strip of 4 (uncommon stamp on cover) airmail issue (1930) + 4.50 Fr airmail issue (1934).

Arrived damaged at London, it was repaired by 3 postal sealing labels affixed at London SW1 on 8 June 1940 (red cancel on reverse).

Bilingual labels (EN / FR): “Found open or damaged and officially secured” / “arrivé ouvert ou avarié et remise en état” – form “P144B”.
Belgian Congo blue label “PAR AVION”.

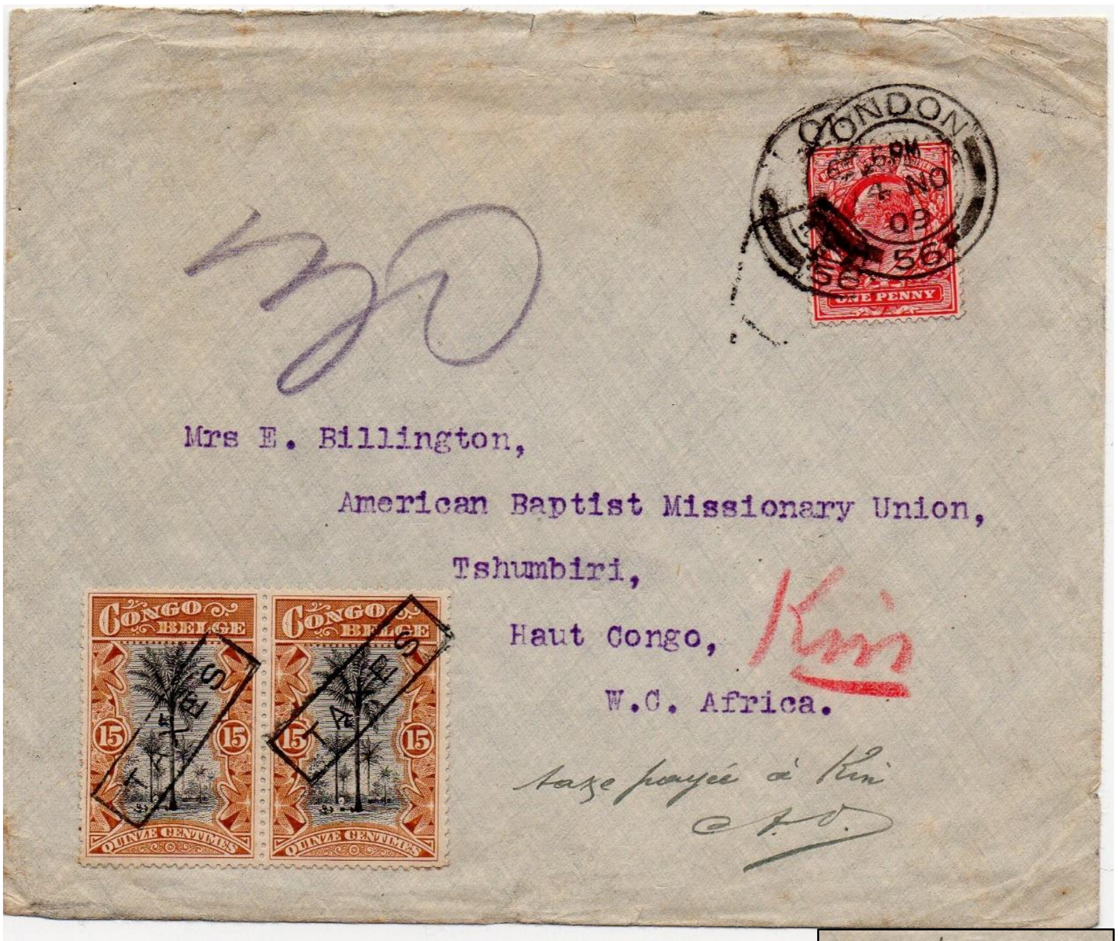
Postage due

1. Belgian Congo Postage due stamps on British covers

Period 1906 - fin 1912
(extract from Charles Stockmans website www.congoposte.be)
A decree of 18 December 1906 stipulates that all items of correspondence which are insufficiently franked shall be stamped up to the amount of the rate to be paid. These stamps are cancelled by means of a "TAXES" linear mark. (9 different types identified)

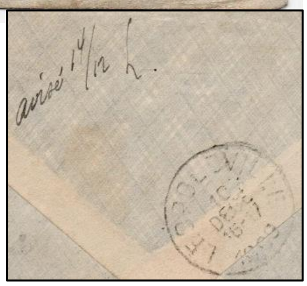
This decree gives rise to the posting of different stamps on the postage stamps. The date stamp should be affixed to the cover next to the stamp. Occasionally, however, stamps bear the date stamp.

The stamp "TAXES" was to be affixed only at the time of the taxation. In fact, a decree dated 29 February 1912 specifies: "The distributing office applies stamps for the amount of the tax to be collected on the taxed correspondence and these stamps are immediately cancelled by means of the" taxes "stamp. The term "distributor office" shall be understood to mean the office that directly serves the addressee's residence. "



Cover sent from London / 56 on November 4th, 1909 to Tshimbiri / Upper Congo – forwarded to Kinshasa – transit by Leopoldville on December 10th

British postal rate for international letter = 2 ½ d per 1 oz. (1907) - underpayment at 1d – deficiency was 1 ½ d, converted at 15 Congolese cents British hexagonal « T » + handwritten note in violet pencil « 30 »
Surcharge of double of what is missing, affixed with a pair of 15c dark-ochre Mols Unilingual issue, cancelled by framed TAXES type III mark of Matadi.



Handwritten note in French with black ink: « taxe payée à Kin » (taxation paid at Kinshasa).
At reverse, handwritten note in French « avisé 14/12 » (notified on Dec 14th).

Period end of 1912 – middle of 1923

(extract from Charles Stockmans website www.congoposte.be)
It is supposed that a new distribution of cancels was made at all the post offices, at this time as a single type. Indeed the previous cancels disappeared completely in 1912 and from the beginning of 1913 we see appearing on letters and cards a stamp "TAXES" of a new type (type IX). From the middle of 1913, the stamps used to collect as postage due stamps are also cancelled by the datestamp of the arrival post office.





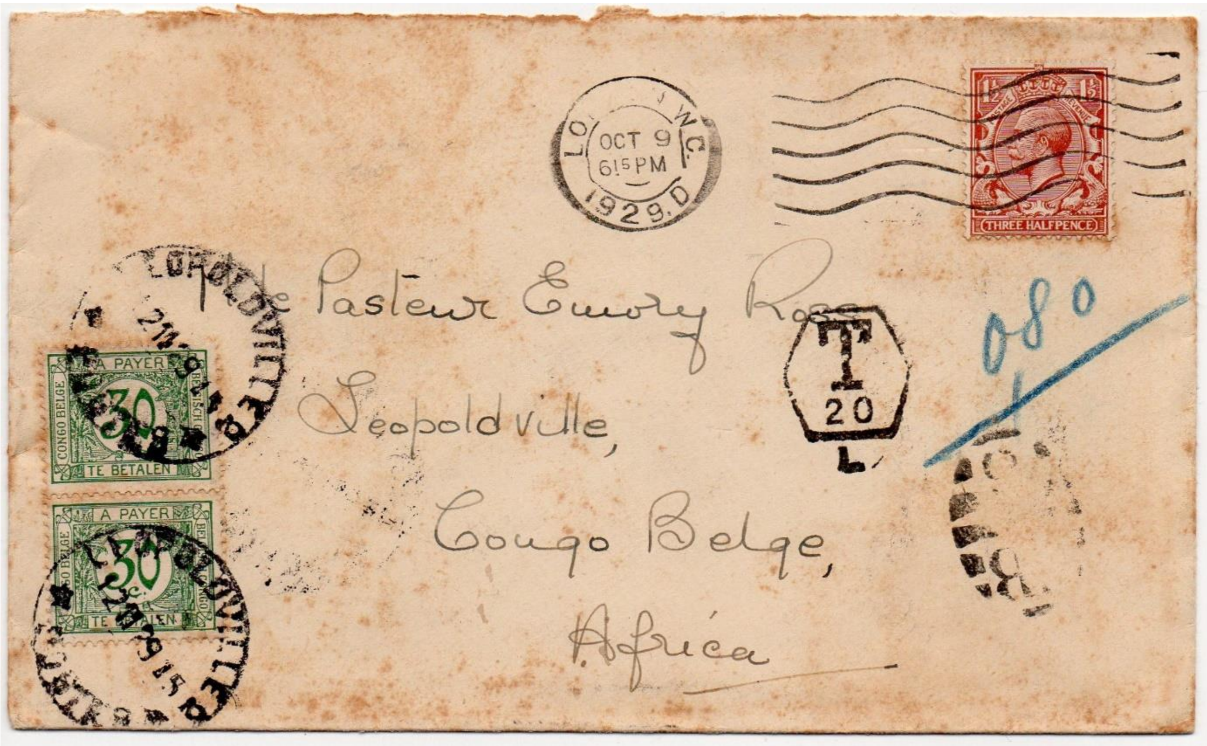
Cover with business letterhead and window, sent from London S.W. on November, 17th 1919 to probably Elisabethville where it arrived on December 19th.

British postal rate for international letter = 2 ½ d per 1 oz. (1907) - underpaid at
1 ½ d – deficiency = 1d, converted at 10 Congolese cents

Surcharge at double of what is missing with a pair of 10c carmine Mols Bilingual 1915 issue, plate with not re-entered sky (centre), cancelled by framed TAXES type IX and datestamp of Elisabethville on Feb 4th 1920.

Period 1923 – 1960

The issue of the first BC postage due stamps was on July 9th, 1923.
Note that exceptionally postage stamp have been used as postage due stamps and also postage due stamps have been used for franking letters during the periods of lacks of stamps.





Cover of « The World’s Evangelical Alliance » (British Organization) sent from London on October 9th, 1929 to a preacher at Leopoldville where it arrived on November 9th.
Private cancel « Received - Nov 12th, 1929 - Conseil Protestant du Congo » (Protestant Council of Congo).

British hexagonal mark « T 20/ L» and handwritten note with blue pencil « 0,80 » in gold franc.

Taxation converted at 60 cent at arrival, double of what is missing.

Postage due stamps affixed at arrival:
- 30c yellow-green – 1923 issue– vertical pair.

Cancelled by the datestamp of Leopoldville (type 7) on November 12th.





Cover (The Illustrated London News & Sketch Ltd) sent from London on November 24th, 1949 to East Sheen SW14. It was then forwarded from Mortlake on November 26th, to Leopoldville where it finally arrived on December 16th with transit by London.

British postage rate: domestic rate UK = 2 1/2d – rate from UK to Congo = 3d
Hexagonal London mark « T 7c »

Framed cancel applied at London (uncommon)
« SURCHARGED OWING TO
/ INSUFFICIENT POSTAGE /
PREPAID 2 1/2D INSTEAD OF 3D/
PLEASE ADVISE SENDER ».

Surcharge converted at 1F
Postage due stamp affixed at arrival:
-1F brown – 1943 issue – perf 14x14 ½
Cancelled by datestamp of Leopoldville on December 19th.



Cover (reverse - (Bank Dominion Colonial and Overseas Barclays) sent from London to Leopoldville where it arrived on September 27th, 1947.

Underpayment – surcharge converted at 15.70 Fr.

Postage due stamps affixed at arrival:
•10c olive – 1943 issue – perf 14x14 ½ - vertical pair
•50c green – 1943 issue – perf 14x14 ½
•1F brown – 1943 issue – perf 14x14 ½
•2F orange – 1943 issue – perf 14x14 ½ - strip of 4 + strip of 3

Cancelled by datestamp of Leopoldville 1B on October 1st, 1947.



Cover sent from London on March 2nd, 1945 to Leopoldville where it arrived on May 26th.
Censor tape "OPENED BY EXAMINER 3626 P.C.90" affixed at departure.
Underpaid at 2 ½ d in place of 3d per 1 oz. (rate of 1940)
Hexagonal mark "T".

Postage stamps affixed at arrival – due to a shortage of postage due stamps
-5c – red – bilingual Palms issue – 4x
-50c green – horizontal pair – bilingual Palms issue – Dutch predominance

Cancelled by datestamp of Leopoldville on May 26th without "T" mark (usually also applied on postage stamps used as postage due stamps)

2. British Postage due stamps on Belgian Congo covers

In January 1840, English postage rates were reduced to 1d. It was at this time that a rule was introduced stating that all internal unpaid or underpaid mail was to be charged at twice the deficiency. The General Postal Union agreed in 1876 that underpaid international mail should receive a 'T' for 'Taxe' handstamp. In 1879 the U.P.U. ruled that underpaid overseas mail should be charged twice the deficiency on arrival at its destination. The single deficiency was marked on the envelope either in manuscript or as a handstamp at the country of origin. This would then be doubled when the cover arrived at its destination. This system was changed in 1907 when double the deficiency was inscribed on the envelope at the country of origin.
On arrival in England a surcharge mark would be applied initially at the Foreign Branch of the British Post Office in London. Such handstamps would display the charge with the letters 'F.B. (for Foreign Branch) plus a code letter underneath.
Later the Inland section of the British Post Office handled incoming overseas mail and new surcharge handstamps were introduced, inscribed 'I.S. (inland section) instead of F.B.
However, in 1920 at the Madrid U.P.U. convention it was agreed that the minimum surcharge on incoming underpaid mail would be 30 ct equivalent to 1 ½d. This was implemented in June 1921. The British 1 ½d surcharge mark was introduced in 1922.





This underpaid cover shows the 1 ½d surcharge applied at the London Foreign Branch. Note the letters 'F.B.' in the surcharge mark. At its destination 1d and ½d postage due stamps were affixed. However, the new house owner in Elmbourne Road refused to accept the cover informing the Post Office that the addressee had moved to Walton on Thames. Hence the charge could not be collected and the postage due stamps were cancelled with a rectangular cachet inscribed – 'CHARGE NOT COLLECTED/ FRESH LABEL REQUIRED'. This cover was then re-posted to the new address and fresh postage due stamps were affixed to the envelope. This charge would then have been paid by the addressee.



In 1927, the correct letter rate for mail from Belgian Congo to England was 1 Fr 50. Only 1 Fr postage had been paid. Hence the underpayment was 50ct.

In 1925, the U.P.U. agreed to reduce the minimum surcharge to 1d. for underpaid mail from overseas. This cover received a framed 'INSUFFICIENTLY PAID' handstamp in London. The surcharge was 1d. On arrival in Scotland, a 1d postage due stamp was affixed.



The postage paid on the cover above was 7 Fr 50ct. However the correct airmail letter rate to England was 8 Fr in 1949. So the deficiency was 50ct. The surcharge was 1 Fr. On arrival in England this surcharge was calculated as 1d. The Post Office Inland Section applied a 1d. I.S. surcharge mark. On arrival in Bath a 1d postage due stamp was affixed and cancelled with a Bath datestamp.

«O.A.T.» marks

Preface

It was always acknowledged that the original classification of O.A.T. marks was probably incomplete [1] which we are now able to confirm as a result of this recent research. It is apparent that some marks were used for short periods only and the reasons are unknown. Morvay [2] refers to an update by Heifetz, but does not tell us whether any of the new findings were made on mail originating from the Belgian Congo. Furthermore it has yet to be confirmed whether all sixteen 'Types' previously listed are known to have been used on mail originating from this source. All of those marks were applied at London/UK. Marks are gerneraly in red ink and sometimes in black or violet.

I bought 25 covers with red 'O.A.T. marks; all had been addressed to a Mr Reuben J. Franco in New York, during the period from 4th September to 31st December 1945. One such cover is illustrated as figure 1.



Figure 1 – O.A.T *Type VII* (7)

In this lot of covers I found some *'Types'* not previously recorded by the existing 'Roman numeral' classification i.e. *Types I to XVI.* [1] There are some very significant dimensional differences which I will detail below using a new provisional 'Arabic numeric' reference. The sequence used in the original classification has not changed, except that for convenience we have reclassified using 'Arabic' as an alternative to the original 'Roman' numerals.

In order to make a more complete record, two examples from Stuart Smith's collection have been incorporated; these of course were not part of the correspondence to Mr. Franco and are indicated by an asterisk * to the *'Type number'*.

The following table records the dates, postage rate and *'O.A.T. Types'* which we have already identified as well as when each was used. However, it should be noted that we have not seen any example of the boxed 'Type XII', but include an illustration for the sake of completeness.

Type classification					
Original	**New**	**Routing**	**Date**	**Postage paid**	**Official rate**
III	3	Leopoldville → Basle (Switzerland)	14.12.1943	Fr. 12	
II*	2	Elisabethville → Neuchatel (Switzerland)	12.2.1944	Fr. 15	
XI	11	Elisabethville → New York (USA)	1945	Fr. 20	Fr. 16
VI	6	Elisabethville → Richmond (USA)	7.8.1945	Fr. 16	Fr. 16
VI	6	Kitega → Umea (Sweden)	9.8.1945	Fr. 9.50	
	18	Stanleyville → New York (USA)	4.9.1945	Fr. 30	Fr. 28.50
	18	Stanleyville → New York (USA)	7.9.1945	Fr. 16.25	Fr. 16
	18	Stanleyville → New York (USA)	13.9.1945	Fr. 30	Fr. 28.50
VI	6	Stanleyville → New York (USA)	14.9.1945	Fr. 30	Fr. 28.50
VI	6	Stanleyville → New York (USA)	19.9.1945	Fr. 53.75	Fr. 53.50
	19	Stanleyville → New York (USA)	21.9.1945	Fr. 16.25	Fr. 16
X	10	Stanleyville → New York (USA)	29.9.1945	Fr. 17.50	Fr. 16
X	10	Stanleyville → New York (USA)	2.10.1945	Fr. 28.50	Fr. 28.50
X	10	Stanleyville → New York (USA)	4.10.1945	Fr. 55	Fr. 53.50
X	10	Stanleyville → New York (USA)	4.10.1945	Fr. 70	Fr. 68
VII	7	Stanleyville → New York (USA)	6.10.1945	Fr. 16.25	Fr. 16
VI	6	Stanleyville → New York (USA)	8.10.1945	Fr. 41.25	Fr. 41
VII	7	Stanleyville → New York (USA)	8.10.1945	Fr. 16.25	Fr. 16
VII	7	Bunia → New York (USA)	9.10.1945	Fr. 16	Fr. 16
VIII	8	Stanleyville → New York (USA)	11.10.1945	Fr. 40	Fr. 41
VIII	8	Stanleyville → New York (USA)	20.10.1945	Fr. 78	Fr. 68
VIII	8	Stanleyville → New York (USA)	20.10.1945	Fr. 29	Fr. 28.50
IX*	9	Libenge → Chicago (USA)	20.11.1945	Fr. 9.50	
XI	11	Stanleyville → New York (USA)	14.11.1945	Fr. 80.50	Fr. 80.50
	21	Elisabethville → New York (USA)	25.11.1945	Fr. 48.50	Fr. 41
XI	11	Stanleyville → New York (USA)	28.11.1945	Fr. 30	Fr. 28.50
XI	11	Stanleyville → New York (USA)	1.12.1945	Fr. 35	Fr. 28.50
	17	Stanleyville → New York (USA)	10.12.1945	Fr. 30	Fr. 28.50
	17	Stanleyville → New York (USA)	10.12.1945	Fr. 17.50	Fr. 16.00
XII	11	Stanleyville → New York (USA)	28.12.1945	Fr. 30	Fr. 28.50
	20	Elisabethville → New York (USA)	31.12.1945	Fr. 16	Fr. 16

The following are examples from the R. J. Franco correspondence of 'Types' already known but re-numbered using Arabic numerals.



Type 6



Type 7



Type 8



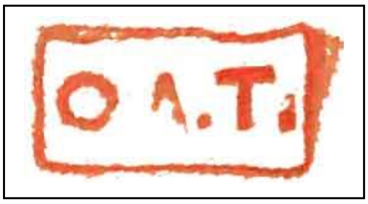
Type 10



Type 11

Note – ***All illustrations are only approximately sized and should not be interpreted as exact.***

Types IX and XII which were illustrated in *Heim's* previously published paper [1] are illustrated here for reference. The existence of 'Type IX' is confirmed but as previously stated that of 'Type XII' on Belgian Congo originating mail needs verification.



Type 9



Type 12

<u>New types.</u> **Provisionally numbered 17 - 21**



Type 17



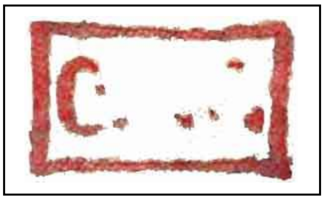
Type 18



Type 19



Type 20



Type 21

The OAT marks were 'rubber stamps' and easily distorted. In many instances their image is blurred and the dimensions provided below are a 'best attempt' at accuracy. With the exception of 'Type XII', all other dimensions listed are of marks known to have been applied on correspondence from the Belgian Congo.

<u>Summary of dimensions and other observations</u>

Type classification [1] Original	New	Frame shape	- Frame - Length mm	Height mm	Letter height	Description
I	1	Oval				
II	2	Oval	53	37	11	Mark in 'Black ink'(February 1944).
III	3	Oval				
IV	4	Oval				
V	5	Oval				
VI	6	Rectangle	55	36	19	Heavy
VII	7	Rectangle	32	18	8	Bottom right frame line is deformed.
VIII	8	Rectangle	32	19	8	Breaks above and below letter 'A'.
IX	9	Rectangle	38	21	9	
X	10	Rectangle	32	18	7.5	Break above letter 'T'
XI	11	Rectangle	32	19	9.5	Letter 'O' is oval.
XII	12	Rectangle	38	22	12	Letter 'O' is oval.
XIII	13	No frame				
XIV	14	Oval				
XV	15	No frame				
XVI	16	2 line oval				
New	17	Rectangle	37	22	10	Top left frame line is deformed.
New	18	Rectangle	32	17	7.5	
New	19	Rectangle	33	19	8	Perhaps an early stage of *'Type 10'*
New	20	Rectangle	34	20	10	Letter 'O' is oval.
New	21	Rectangle	32	18	9	Letter 'O' is oval.

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